

ISTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO ORIENTALE
DIPARTIMENTO DI STUDI ASIATICI

ISTITUTO ITALIANO PER IL MEDIO ED ESTREMO ORIENTE

DEBORAH KLIMBURG-SALTER

THE KINGDOM OF BĀMIYĀN

BUDDHIST ART AND CULTURE OF THE HINDU KUSH



NAPLES - ROME

1989

وَالْمَلِكُ طَابَتْ
دین الدین لودین کاتون
کتاب پر لپس شمیرہ



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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The title, The Kingdom of Bāmiyān, is taken from Hsüan-tsang's 7th century travel report and is meant to call attention to the fact that — in the wider sense — we are addressing the problem not of a single structure, artistic configuration or even complex but of a distinctive phase in the history of Buddhist art; a period of intense cultural change when Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted with the new Islamic institutions. This phase in the history of Afghanistan has only recently begun to be explored. The picture which is gradually forming of this late Buddhist culture owes much to studies by Prof. Gérard Fussman and Prof. Maurizio Taddei among others as is clear from the text.

Less obvious however, is the influence of Walter Spink's painstaking studies on Ajanṭā because the themes, forms, and functions of the respective sites are quite different. Nonetheless Spink's approach to Ajanṭā as an integrated functional entity, intimately connected to historical events and personalities provides a model for the study of monumental rock-cut complexes. The logical extension of his method would be towards a more refined chronological analysis as new historical data become available. At present however, the reader, not familiar with the subject will undoubtedly be frustrated by the lack of historical precision. Only very rarely does a specific date or historical personage appear. But this very vagueness at least signals the limits of our knowledge.

I have attempted to relate the fragmentary art historical evidence to other contemporary sources — literary, numismatic, etc. Thus, the general method assumes that a monumental religious complex must be seen within the context of contemporaneous political events and ideas; and that the evolution of artistic forms can serve to illuminate both the internal dynamic of the arts and to suggest the correlation between artistic activities and external events. The present study is divided into four parts. The basic documentation is included in the third and fourth parts, that is, The Descriptive Catalogue and Appendix II, The Comparative Formal Analysis (both taken from my Ph. D. dissertation presented to Harvard University at the end of 1975). Here we note the limited and coherent stylistic development of all the Buddhist paintings of the Hindu Kush and the presence of consistent compositions and iconographic themes. This evidence suggests certain working hypotheses:

- 1) all the arts of the Hindu Kush belonged to a single cultural period from the 7th to 9th centuries*
- 2) they probably resulted from a consistent source of patronage*
- 3) the slight transformation of the visual forms demonstrates a movement towards a later Mahāyāna perspective. These hypotheses indicated the direction and scope of the present study.*

Part I attempts to define the contours of the broader contexts within which the Buddhist art of the kingdom of Bāmiyān was formed, flourished, and then disappeared. Because of the limitations of our primary sources I was unable to test these basic hypotheses. Rather Part II has the modest goal of defining certain key problems

and suggesting the direction of future research. It is hardly possible that all of the queries and suggestions put forth in the following pages will ultimately prove useful, rather my hope is that as peace returns to Afghanistan there will be the opportunity for myself and others to revise these hypotheses in the light of future discoveries.

In any case, the Buddhist culture of the Hindu Kush is so complex that the unravelling of its secrets must depend on a combination of skills and perspectives. Thus, this study, though designed to be used independently should be seen by the serious student not as a substitute for but as corollary to other recent studies in the field. Unfortunately all but Dr. Tarzi's important monograph (Tarzi 1977) appeared after this manuscript was given to the present publishers in 1984 at which time only pertinent references could be added to the bibliography. Otherwise the manuscript reflects the state of research as it was in 1980 when the manuscript was completed. Thus, I should like to draw the readers' attention to the following important publications on the Hindu Kush which are not found in the bibliography: the splendid photographic documentation and plans contained in the volumes edited by Higuchi; the long delayed publication by Le Berre on the civil architecture of the Hindu Kush; as well as the important archaeological studies on the ceramic finds by Lyonnet & Gardin; and Kuwayama's study on Chinese literary sources¹. A glance at the list of illustrations will demonstrate that almost all scholars recently concerned with the study of the Hindu Kush have permitted me to publish some of their plans and reconstructions. For their generosity I would like to thank Dr. Z. Tarzi, Prof. A. Miyaji, Prof. T. Kotera.

Also included in the fourth part of this study (Appendix I and III) are summaries which should assist the reader in relating the different contributions on the art of the Hindu Kush. I would like to thank Prof. Takayasu Higuchi for sending me the concordance published in Appendix I (at the time unpublished) and Mr. R. Sengupta, formerly Director of Conservation, Archaeological Survey of India, who directed the conservation of Bāmiyān for contributing Appendix III. Above all else one must acknowledge Dr. Tarzi's generosity which undoubtedly encouraged this scholarly interaction both while he was director of the Afghan Institute of Archaeology and since. During the ten years that we have all been 'exiled' from Afghanistan — this mutual cooperation has been important for the continuing vitality of the field.

As is often the case with research which spans several continents and many years I must acknowledge my indebtedness and thanks to many institutions and people. The field research and periods dedicated to research and writing would not have been possible without grants from several sources. During my Graduate studies and the first three years of field research in Afghanistan, India, the Soviet Union, and Iran I benefited particularly from grants from Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the National Defense Foreign Language Fellowships, and the Fulbright-Hayes Award. From 1977-1980, grants from Harvard University, Center for

¹ Higuchi, T. (ed.): *Bāmiyān, Art and Archaeological Researches on The Buddhist Cave Temples in Afghanistan 1970-1978*, vols. I-IV, Dohosha, 1983-1984. (In Japanese, vol. IV with English Summary); Le Berre, M.: *Monuments pré-Islamiques de l'Hindukush Central*, Paris, 1987; Le Berre, M., Gardin, J.C., Lyonnet, B.: 'Données archéologiques inédites sur l'histoire de Bāmiyān (Afghanistan)', in: *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, ed. G. Gnoli et L. Lanciotti, vol. 2, Rome, 1987, pp. 775-787; Kuwayama, S.: 'Literary Evidence for Dating the Colossi in Bāmiyān', in: *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, ed. G. Gnoli et L. Lanciotti, vol. 2, Rome, 1987, pp. 703-729. Ebert, J.: *The Parinirvāṇa*, Stuttgart, 1985 contains a good summary of the problem at Bāmiyān, pp. 167-190.

Middle East studies, the University of California Academic Senate, and the University of California Career Development Award.

During my years of field research (1971-1974; 1977-1978) the assistance in Afghanistan of Mr. A.A. Motamedi, then Director National Museum, Afghanistan, Dr. Rawhan Farhadi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. C. Moustamandi, former Director of the Afghan Institute of Archaeology and the members of the Archaeological Survey of India working in the Bāmiyān conservation team under the direction of R. Sengupta and Śri M.N. Deshpande then Director-General of Archaeology. Dr. S.P. Gupta and Dr. C. Bhattacharya-Haesner, Central Asian Dept. of the National Museum, New Delhi, Mlle J. Auboyer, then Director of the Musée Guimet, Paris; Prof. V. Lukonin, and Prof. B. Marshak, Oriental Dept. State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad; Dr. Müller, Museum für Indische Kunst, Dahlem Berlin; Mr. F. Sehrai, then Director, Peshawar Museum; Mr. Mahdooi, then Director Śri Pratap Singh Museum, Kashmir; Mr. Bahn, Keeper of the Central Asian Museum, University of Kashmir. Haruko Motamedi graciously translated Japanese publications for me.

As this book owes much to the original Dissertation I must acknowledge the following: I am grateful to Prof. Oleg Grabar for his instruction, assistance, and critical advice throughout my graduate studies. I believe the strength of his theoretical and methodological enquiries can be judged from the fact that they have proved as useful for the study of the art of India and Central Asia as for the Islamic world. I benefited from Prof. John Rosenfield's vast knowledge of Indian art and Buddhist iconography through his own publications as well as his meticulous criticisms of this study. Any research in this field must be indebted to Prof. Benjamin Rowland for his pioneering efforts. Bāmiyān figures prominently in his first and last publications on Central Asian painting and it was he who proposed to me the problem of the chronology of the paintings of Bāmiyān. Over the many years since then I often regretted his untimely demise which prevented me from seeking his much needed advice. Prof. Richard Frye and Prof. Masatoshi Nagatomi offered valuable suggestions in their respective disciplines. I would also like to thank Prof. Robert Dankoff now of the University of Chicago for his assistance. Prof. Ernst Steinkellner, University of Vienna, read several chapters and offered valuable suggestions, as did Prof. Martin Powers, now at the University of Michigan.

The present book was essentially written in 1980, Elisabeth Goldblatt, Dr. Vicki Joraaman, Larry Mermelstein and Neil Kreitman read early drafts of this book. I thank them for their patience and criticism. I also thank Gabriela Trinkka who assisted with proof reading and prepared the Index.

Much of the field research on which this book is based was conducted together with my husband Dr. Max Klimburg. The success of these undertakings owes much to his skill, knowledge of Afghanistan, and long standing interest in this subject. He also commented on several parts of this study, I gratefully acknowledge his unfailing encouragement.

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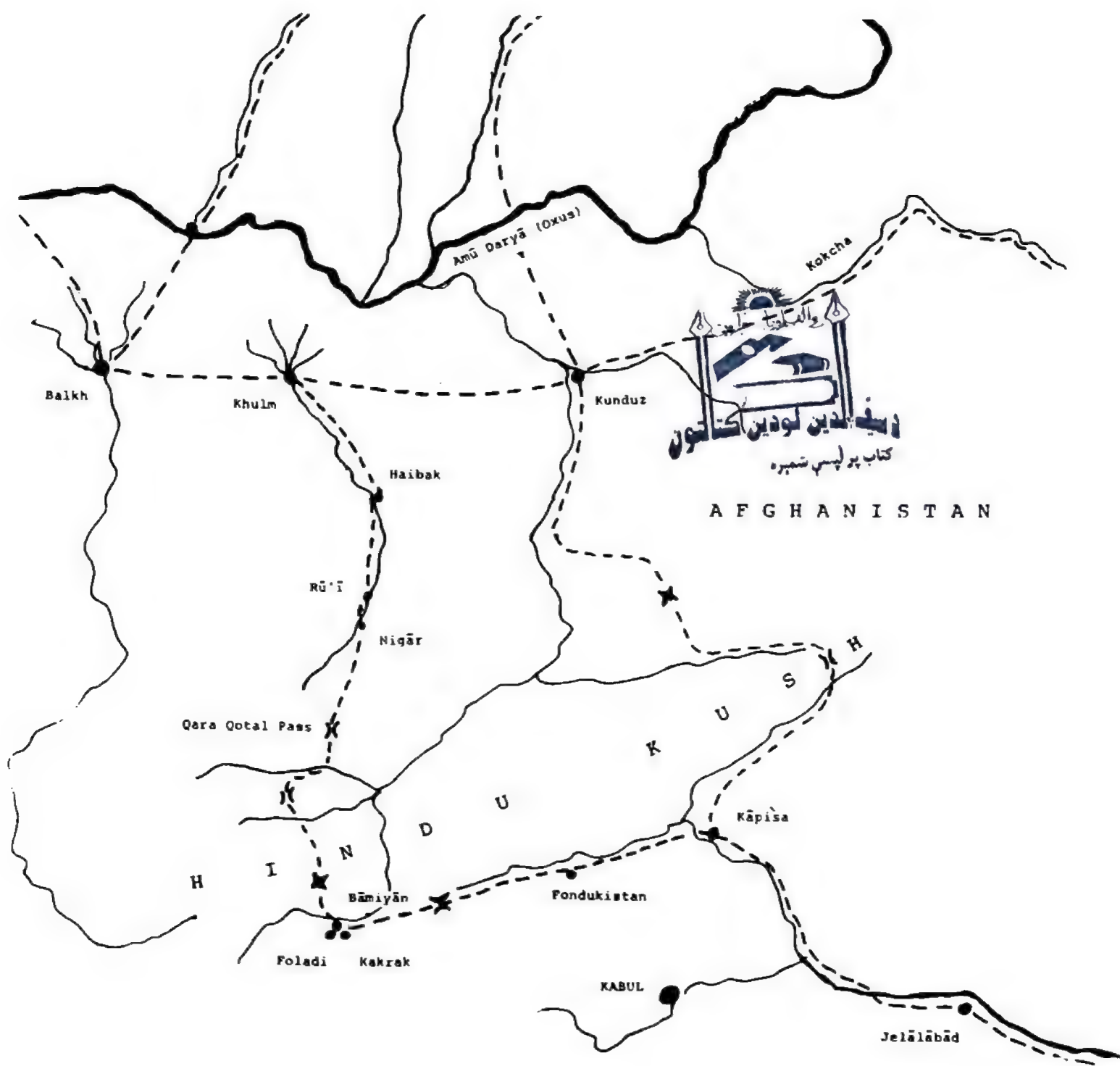
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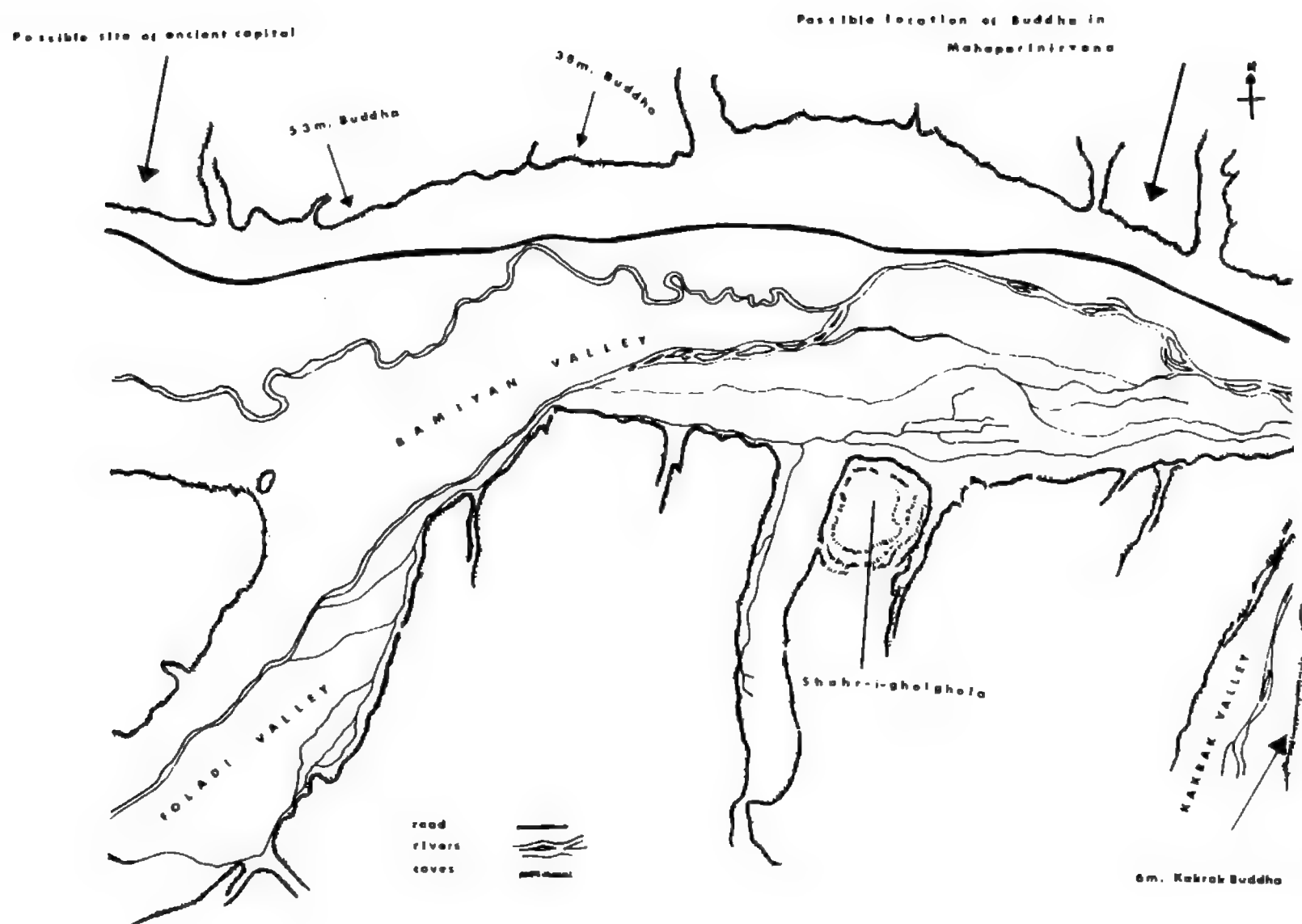
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.A.	<i>Archives of Asian Art.</i>
A.G.B.G.	Alfred Foucher, <i>L'Art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhâra</i> , Paris, Vol. I: 1905, Vol. II: 1917, 1922, 1951.
<i>Ancient Art</i>	Mizuno Seiichi et al., <i>Ancient Art of Afghanistan</i> , Tokyo, 1964.
B.G.A.	<i>Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum.</i>
B.M.F.E.A.	<i>Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities</i> (Stockholm).
IsMEO	Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
J.A.	<i>Journal Asiatique.</i>
J.R.S.E.A.	<i>Journal of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of the Arts.</i>
Kotera	Kotera, T., Maeda, K., and Miyaji, A., <i>Bāmiyān: Report of Survey in 1969</i> , Nagoya, 1971.
M.D.A.F.A.	Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan.
S.P.A.W.	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.</i>

1. 2. 3.



Map. 1. Hindu Kush area.
By Max Klimburg



Map 2. Bāmiyān Valley.
By Elsie Ritchie Shepherd

PART I

THE BUDDHIST CULTURE
OF THE HINDU KUSH

Chapter I

Introduction

At this time the [Buddhist] schools were mutually contentious; they hastened to grasp the end without regarding the beginning; they seized the flower and rejected the reality; so there followed the contradictory teaching of the North and South, and the confused sounds of 'Yes' and 'No', perpetual words! On this he [Hiuen Tsiang] was afflicted at heart, and fearing lest he should be unable to find out completely the errors of translations, he purposed to examine thoroughly the literature of the *perfume elephant*, and to copy throughout the list of the dragon palace.

With a virtue of unequalled character, and at a time favourable in its indications, he took his staff, dusted his clothes, and set off for distant regions [...]

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 5)

More than a millennium after the creation of the colossal images of Bāmiyān, the largest Buddhist sculptures in the world, the Chinese monk Hsüan-tsang, remains the most perceptive guide to this Buddhist center. At that time, Bāmiyān was thriving, while in most other places that the pilgrim travelled he encountered portents of the destruction of Buddhism. Frequently, he enumerated the loss of faith in the Buddhist teachings and the corruption of religious practice. Yet he was equally quick to acknowledge devotion and generosity. There is neither sentimentality nor anger in his report. Observing the inevitable processes of decay and destruction only confirmed his belief in the cycle of regeneration. The somewhat paradoxical but supremely Buddhist virtues of objectivity and compassion transform his travel diary into a philosophical statement. From the ancient monasteries of Bāmiyān, as of India generally, he carried back to China Buddhist ideas and texts which, through his translations and commentaries, (together with those of other scholars), became part of a new phase of Buddhist practice.

It is of course only in retrospect that the dynamics of history are revealed. Today we read Hsüan-tsang's narrative with a sense of fatalism, knowing that in a few generations Buddhism will have disappeared, to be replaced, for a time, by other faiths. The Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush represents the last creative moment of Buddhism in Afghanistan. But as we try to identify its impact on the art and doctrine of the Himalayas, we are reminded of the law of karma, the working out of the law of cause and effect through successive lifetimes.

A thousand years later, Himalayan Buddhism is again threatened. Once again the wheel turns, a new philosophy and a new way of life replaces the traditions

of the Tibetan monasteries now in ruins. But already the results of these new Buddhist migrations can be seen. Buddhist teachers are travelling to the West as in Hsüan-tsang's time they travelled to the East carrying sūtras and establishing new monasteries.

Two years after Hsüan-tsang left his home, in A.D. 632 he visited Bāmiyān. His description of that visit and other observations made during his fifteen-year pilgrimage in India form a narrative thread through the present study. His observations allow us to understand not only the original appearance of the main complex in the Bāmiyān Valley, but also its function. In addition, through his descriptions of the many peoples he encountered and their lifestyles, we are able to begin to identify the people who built Bāmiyān and who worshipped there.

The intention of this study is to present new approaches to the meaning of the art of the Hindu Kush and the function of the main Buddhist center in the Bāmiyān Valley. Such an extensive religious complex as Bāmiyān must have had a particularly significant relationship to its society and its time. This study will suggest a continuous source of patronage for the main religious center in the Bāmiyān Valley. Further, it suggests that this center had a coherent function, which served both political and Buddhist institutions. Earlier art historical studies did not recognize this coherent function because of the attribution of different parts of the Bāmiyān center, as well as the other sites of the Hindu Kush, to different periods. The dates proposed ranged from the second to the seventh century A.D. It will be shown that the art of Bāmiyān and the other four sites of the Hindu Kush — Fondukistān, Folādi, Kakrak, and Nigār — reflect a much shorter, single historical period comprising the seventh to ninth centuries. I identify the majority of the art of these sites as belonging to what I call the 'Bāmiyān Style'. Other remains from the former Buddhist kingdom of Bāmiyān, which once included thriving cities, can be identified as ruins of fortresses and fortifications. They are, however, very fragmentary and the archaeological studies have not yet been published.

There is little literary and no numismatic evidence pertaining to the political, social, and economic history of Bāmiyān. The indications are that Bāmiyān was never an important center of political power, but served as a ceremonial and spiritual center that attracted and comforted crowds of pilgrims and merchants travelling between Central and South Asia. The Bāmiyān Valley was also an important commercial center in the Hindu Kush, which separates the plains of Central Asia from the gateway to India.

Apparently, the five sites of the Buddhist kingdom of Bāmiyān in the Hindu Kush were created and/or enlarged during the period of Turkic domination of eastern Afghanistan, from the end of the sixth through the early eighth centuries. Throughout the seventh century A.D., the Yabghu of the Western Turks, whose capital was in northern Ṭukhāristān, was overlord of all the regional rulers from the Oxus to the Indus Rivers. Some of these rulers were Turks and Hephthalites, both of whom were perhaps Altaic speaking peoples, while other rulers were possibly Iranians, as were the majority of the population they governed at this time. The ruler of Bāmiyān owed nominal allegiance to the Turkic Yabghu, though he also had political and cultural connections to the king of Kapiśa-Kabul, presumably also a Turk, who was the most powerful ruler south of the Hindu Kush until the first half of the eighth century. At that time, the king of Zabulistan, probably a Chionite, became a major political force. The Turki-Śāhi dynasty at Kapiśa-Kabul was followed by the Hindu Śāhi dynasty, which by the end of the eighth century, and through the ninth, constituted the dominant political power from Kabul to modern Attock on the Indus River in Pakistan.

The geopolitical position of Afghanistan in the seventh and eighth centuries was not unlike that of Afghanistan in the nineteenth century. During both these periods, a local dynasty with its power base in east-central Afghanistan was manipulated by the imperialistic ambitions of its powerful neighbors. Beginning in the seventh century, the T'ang Chinese, then the Arabs, the Kashmiris, and the Tibetans, all began to pressure the Western Turks — in most cases, under the guise of protecting their borders from each other. Since the Muslims were the ultimate victors in this power struggle, down to the present time, the influence and short-term gains of the Chinese in the seventh century, and the Kashmiris in the eighth, until now have been largely ignored by historians. This study will explore the kingdom of Bāmiyān's relation to these cultures during the seventh through ninth centuries, and the resulting effect on the art and religion of the Hindu Kush and the western Himalayas.

On the basis of comparative stylistic and iconographic analyses of paintings and sculpture, we can relate the art of the Hindu Kush to a cultural zone that included Central Asia from Bactria and Sogdia to Kucha and Turfan, and historical northwest India from Kashmir to the Hindu Kush. In the first half of the seventh century, parallels for the art of the Hindu Kush can be drawn with the art of Central Asia. In the latter half of the seventh century, as a result of the Arab invasions, the ancient north-south trade routes were disrupted, and artistic and religious associations began to reorient themselves eastward toward the mountainous regions of northwest India.

The art of the Hindu Kush may be considered the westernmost extension and the earliest phase of Śāhi art, which in historical northwest India dated from the late sixth through the tenth century A.D. and extended from the Hindu Kush to Ghazni and east to the Salt Range, in Pakistan.

The religious themes in Hindu Kush art can be related both to the doctrines of the Lokottaravādin, a proto-Mahāyāna school belonging to the Mahāsāṃghika, whose main center was at Bāmiyān, and to the then-current 'proto-Tantric' art of Central Asia and greater Kashmir. The art and rituals of Bāmiyān document the joining of political and religious institutions. These themes have a long regional tradition, dating back to the great Kuṣāṇas.

In the Hindu Kush, we are confronted with the methodological problem of reconstructing from exceedingly fragmentary evidence, the art of a culture undergoing intense socio-political change. The art historical evidence, fragmentary and difficult to interpret as it is, is the largest body of primary evidence available. The original configuration of each architectural unit (See Descriptive Catalogue) is established in order to reveal the iconographic logic and function of the decoration found in situ. With the complete body of visual evidence before us, we can then understand and interpret the basic and repetitive patterns that characterized the Bāmiyān school of art. Once we recognize its consistent iconographic configurations, we can hypothesize on the function of the art of the Bāmiyān Valley and suggest directions for further research. Investigations in related fields will allow us eventually to understand more about our central problem — how these visual forms were understood and used by their society. Until that time, however, our only guide to Bāmiyān as it appeared in the seventh century to the multitudes of pilgrims who sought shelter and solace there remains the Chinese monk, Hsüan-tsang.

In the seventh century A.D. Mahāyāna groups were significantly represented in Afghanistan. By the eighth century they clearly dominated. From the seventh century, a new form of Buddhism, later called Vajrayāna, emerged and eventually dominated the Himalayan area. A 'proto-Tantric' stage of this philosophy may be

identified in the art of the Hindu Kush. In the tenth century Buddhism was displaced by Islam. After a thousand years of Buddhism and Indian cultural domination, the balance shifted toward the Western religion of Islam, and a new civilization emerged.

Despite the threat of powerful Muslim armies and the resulting socio-economic disruption, the most creative moment in the art of the Hindu Kush occurred during this critical period of cultural conflict and change. In the art of the Hindu Kush we can identify a vigorous Buddhist culture in the process of formulating dynamic new images and concepts which, in the adjacent regions to the East, developed into Tantric Buddhist art.

Because of its geographic and temporal centrality, Bāmiyān's cultural history is important for Buddhist and Islamic studies of India and Central Asia. Given the lack of written, numismatic, or archaeological evidence, it is not yet possible to define social and economic organization. Nonetheless, the painting and sculpture of the sites of the Hindu Kush and its immediately adjacent regions are important source material for historical and social inquiry. Through understanding the role of this monumental art as vehicles for religious and social commentary, we are able, in the final chapter (IX), to suggest the ideological background of the paintings.

Previous Studies: The Art Historical Problem

The colossal Bāmiyān statues, the largest Buddhist images in the world, occupy a conspicuous location along the important caravan and pilgrimage route between China and India. It is therefore remarkable that so little is actually known about the Buddhist center in the Bāmiyān Valley. Chinese pilgrims, as well as court historians, carefully recorded Buddhist sites in northern India and Central Asia. The Buddhist pilgrims Hsüan-tsang in A.D. 632 and Hui-ch'ao in A.D. 727 provide the only eyewitness accounts of the Buddhist sanctuary at Bāmiyān. Among the other Chinese pilgrims to India, none mentions the site. Many travellers passed through the valley in later times, and their explanations of the colossal Buddha images became progressively more fanciful¹.

The study of the pre-Islamic culture of the Hindu Kush can be divided into two phases both marked by archaeological exploration. The first scholarly discussion of Bāmiyān in the twentieth century appeared in A. Foucher's pioneering study of the Buddhist sites of Afghanistan *La Vieille Route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*².

The first studies dedicated to the Buddhist complex in the Bāmiyān Valley were the two subsequent volumes in the M.D.A.F.A. series (*Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan*), which record the results of three surveys in 1922, 1924, 1930, and one small archaeological dig conducted under hurried and difficult conditions³. The late Benjamin Rowland undertook the only other significant study of the site on the basis of his own visit soon after the D.A.F.A. study. All subsequent commentaries had been based on the observations of these original investigators until a new period of field work began in the late 1960s (Fig. 32).

¹ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 49-53; Li Hwui, *The Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, pp. 52-53; Walter Fuchs, 'Huei-Ch'ao's Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien um 726', pp. 448-449. The date of Hsüan-tsang's visit is debated; C. Masson, 'Bamian and the Kaian Dynasty'.

² A. Foucher, *La Vieille Route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*.

³ A. Godard et al., *Les Antiquités Bouddhiques de Bāmiyān, avec des notes additionnelles de P. Pelliot; J. Hackin and J. Carl, Nouvelles Recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*.

It has been customary to discuss the art of each of the Buddhist centers separately. Since the Buddhist center in the Bāmiyān Valley was the most important in the Hindu Kush, most of the discussion has focused on it. Short reports on each of the other pre-Islamic sites of the Hindu Kush appeared in the M.D.A.F.A. series⁴.

These short reports concerned themselves with the two basic problems confronting the student of Afghan archaeology assembling the basic data about these distant and inaccessible sites and proposing a relative chronology for the art and architecture. The logistical and intellectual problems confronting these first European archaeologists were enormous and it is not surprising that their early conclusions were subsequently reevaluated, even by themselves. An absolute chronology has never been proposed for the art of any of the sites of the Hindu Kush. The most influential studies were conducted by Rowland and Hackin who each suggested dates for different components of the Buddhist center of Bāmiyān using, for the most part, different criteria.

The failure to establish even a relative chronology for Bāmiyān, no less for all the sites of the Hindu Kush, has necessarily impaired any efforts to understand either the iconography or the larger questions, such as the religious or social patterns of the society that created the art. Because of the lingering impact of the old ideas about Bāmiyān on all recent studies on the Hindu Kush, it will be useful to first outline the earlier conclusions about this complex.

(1) It was usually assumed that the Bāmiyān colossi were the original inspiration for the Central Asian and north Chinese rock colossi, and therefore Bāmiyān would necessarily have predated these latter examples. This assumption, however, did not usually serve to fix the date of the paintings, which were often considered to be much later than the colossi⁵.

(2) The art of Bāmiyān was dated from the second to the seventh centuries, and was seen as a hybrid of Central Asian, Indian, Gandhāran, and Sasanian styles⁶. The Sasanian element was considered important because of the presumed political and cultural influence of that Iranian dynasty. These conclusions were reached by isolating small iconographic details, such as fluttering scarves, or attempting to compare heraldic emblems and crown types with their Sasanian counterparts⁷.

⁴ Kakrak in Vol. 3, pp. 39-46; Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan in Vol. 2, pp. 65-74; Fondukistān in Vol. 8, pp. 42-60; and one article by U. Scerrato on Folādi, 'A Short Note on Some Recently Discovered Buddhist Grottoes near Bāmiyān, Afghanistan', pp. 94-120.

⁵ A. Foucher, 'Lettre à la Société Asiatique sur les découvertes bouddhiques de Bāmiyān'; B. Rowland, 'Gandhāra and Late Antique Art: The Buddha Image', p. 230. Rowland still appears to have held this view in 1967 when the third revised edition of *The Art and Architecture of India* appeared; in the paperback edition of this book (Baltimore, 1979), based on the 1967 version, he states: 'It seems likely that if the smaller of the two colossi is to be dated in the second or third century A.D., the larger is at least two hundred years later in execution [...]. The influence of these first colossi of Mahāyāna Buddhism on the Buddhist art of the entire Far East is inestimable: one has only to think of the rock-cut colossi at Yun-Kang and Lung-Men [...]' (p. 127). Alexander Soper briefly refutes this idea in his *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, p. 270. See also his review of *Chinese Monumental Art*, by P.C. Swann, pp. 283-285, where he says: '[...] there is nothing better than a possibility that they [the Bāmiyān colossi] were finished and celebrated before the 460s. This is a dead dog, my masters: let us give it seemly burial', (p. 284).

⁶ Godard et al., *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*; Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles Recherches à Bāmiyān*; R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*.

⁷ See L. Bachhofer's review of B. Rowland and A. Coomaraswamy, *The Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia, and Ceylon*, pp. 230-232, for criticism of Rowland's interpretations of this kind. Recent art historical studies continue to use this method, as for example, Z. Tarzi, *L'architecture et le décor rupestre de Bāmiyān*. In addition to an analysis of the architectural decoration, Tarzi

Based on this assumption of Sasanian influence, Hackin, in the third volume of the M.D.A.F.A. publications, outlined a relative chronology for the caves of Bāmiyān from the third to the seventh centuries. Another consideration for his chronology was an hypothesis of the evolution of stucco decoration succeeding painted decoration in the caves.

(3) Ghirshman, and later Tarzi, proposed, on the basis of numismatic evidence, that the patrons of Bāmiyān were Hephthalites. Since very little is understood about the culture of the Hephthalites, it has been impossible to integrate this attribution into a coherent definition of the art and culture of the kingdom of Bāmiyān.

(4) The few studies of iconographic motifs, such as the complex in the 38-meter Buddha niche, were conducted without acknowledging the interrelated function of Buddhist iconography. No attempt was ever made to consider the complete iconographic program of any of the sites.

(5) Despite the acknowledged stylistic relationship among the Buddhist centers in the Hindu Kush, no attempt has been made to explain their historical, cultural, or functional relationship. Bāmiyān was seen as the earliest site, followed by Kakrak (in an adjacent valley), then Fondukistān (128 km. away). Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan was considered next and the latest was Folādi. Almost no critical study exists on Folādi, which is the largest complex after Bāmiyān.

(6) Earlier studies failed to consider the daily religious life of the site: the sectarian preferences or rituals and liturgies that might have been performed.

The consistent method in all these studies was to attempt to date isolated motifs, numismatic elements, or architectural and pictorial features without attempting to relate them to the complete architectural or iconographic configuration, nor were these parts related to an absolute chronological development of the site as a whole. This methodological weakness caused numerous inconsistencies in both Hackin's and Rowland's theories. Henri Deydier presented an excellent summary and critique of the art historical theories proposed up to 1950⁸. In attempting to assess their divergent opinions, Deydier concluded that the question of chronology would have to remain open pending further work on the development of later Gandhāran art and the analysis of any forthcoming inscriptional evidence from Bāmiyān itself. It was difficult at that time to criticize the few iconographical and historical studies.

After decades of repetitive statements on Bāmiyān, there was a sudden explosion of field work in the few years at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. During the following years, important studies were completed in French, Japanese, and English. Unfortunately because of their diverse nationalities, most of these scholars did not know the details of each other's conclusions until their respective works were published. For example, at the time that this present study was presented as a Ph. D. thesis at the end of 1975, only the study by the Nagoya University in Japanese had appeared. The latter provided the first drawings of the complete pictorial remains of each architectural unit. This painstaking work proved invaluable to my own studies. In fact, the Nagoya University team together with the Archaeological Survey of India, under the direction of R. Sengupta, were

uses an analysis of the crowns on the figures painted around the 35-meter Buddha (now called 38 m.) as a key point in his dating of the site. Tarzi admits, however, that the analogies he makes are only general and he cannot find identical parallels. Tarzi uses the most recent numismatic study on the relevant crown types, see R. Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*.

⁸ H. Deydier, *Contribution à l'étude de l'art du Gandhāra*, pp. 178-201.

the first into the field, followed by the Afghan archaeologist Z. Tarzi and soon after by myself. In addition to the increased ease of conducting research in the Hindu Kush, three factors may be considered responsible for this sudden upsurge of scholarly interest in Bāmiyān: (1) the extensive Soviet archaeological and scholarly activity in Central Asia, which not only vastly increased the corpus of Indo-Iranian art, but virtually changed our perception of the cultural history of the region; (2) the publication of Göbl's major numismatic study in 1967 which provided the first workable historical framework for the principalities in eastern Afghanistan in the post-Kuṣāṇa period; (3) the presence of the conservation team from the Archaeological Survey of India from 1969 to 1977⁹. They generously and tirelessly gave assistance to all serious scholars working in Bāmiyān. Not only did their experience and equipment enable all of us to scale previously inaccessible heights, but their increasing knowledge of the paintings and sculpture was available to everyone.

It is interesting that despite the fact that all of the scholars alluded to above proceeded independently during the research stage of their work, their conclusions tended in the same innovative direction, first published by Rowland in 1970.

The publication of Rowland's last book on Central Asian painting in 1970¹⁰ may be considered to mark the beginning of this second phase of scholarship on the art of the Hindu Kush. In this work Rowland attempted to relate the new Russian finds and ideas to the previous hypotheses concerning the art of the different sites of the Hindu Kush and Central Asia. He was unable to arrive at a synthesis of these old views and the new data, rather the result is sometimes incoherent and often contradictory¹¹. The basic problem for Hindu Kush studies remained — that of chronology. After studying Bāmiyān over a period of almost forty years, Rowland concluded:

The precise chronology of the art of the Bāmiyān Valley is a problem difficult to resolve with any degree of accuracy. We have observed that certain iconographic and stylistic elements in the 'Sasanian' cycles of painting and sculpture surrounding the 35-meter Buddha point to a date in the sixth and seventh centuries. Roughly the same period has been suggested for the more Indian style of the 53-meter colossus and the wall paintings of the giant niche. It is obvious, of course, that all of these schemes of decoration were completed before the visit of Hsüan-Tsang in 622 [sic]¹².

Rowland did not date Kakrak more precisely. He attributed the paintings to the sixth and seventh centuries on the basis of the crown worn by the so-called 'Hunter King': 'The Hunter King wears a tiara with three crescents. This device resembles the crowns of some of the Hephthalite rulers of Bāmiyān as seen in their coin portraits'¹³. The method of establishing a chronology on the basis of a general resemblance between the crown of a painted deity and a numismatic portrait is problematical as shall be explained further in Chapter VII. In addition, these coins have not been excavated in the Hindu Kush and there are no other features besides

⁹ This work has been conducted under the direction of the then Chief of Conservation of the Archaeological Survey of India, Mr. R. Sengupta. He is preparing a book with complete photographic documentation of the conservation activities and a description of their procedures and discoveries. At the present time the following preliminary notices by him have appeared: *The Buddha in Afghanistan: India's Aid to Bring Bāmiyān Back to Life*, 'The Preservation Work', and 'India Helps Afghanistan in Preserving her Heritage'. See also Appendix B.

¹⁰ B. Rowland, *Zentralasien* (English edition: *The Art of Central Asia*).

¹¹ M. Klimburg, 'Review of *Zentralasien*, by Benjamin Rowland'.

¹² Rowland, *The Art of Central Asia*, p. 106.

¹³ *Ibid.*

elements of the crowns on the coins linking these kings to Bāmiyān, nor other primary evidence identifying them as the rulers of the Hindu Kush.

The dates offered for Fondukistān also depended on numismatic evidence, but the method was different. In this case, coins excavated at the site provided the earliest possible date for the site. From these coins Rowland concluded that the 'finds from Fondukistān are certainly no earlier than the seventh century'¹⁴. Although he arrived at no more precise dating in his text, he did identify the illustrations of sculpture and painting from Fondukistān as being from the seventh and eighth centuries. He did not mention Folādi. Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan (here called Nigār) is compared to the 'Sasanian Cycle' in the 38-meter Buddha niche and dated to the sixth and seventh centuries¹⁵.

This second phase of archaeological exploration at Bāmiyān will certainly generate a large number of studies on different aspects of the art. Future Japanese publications will undoubtedly continue to make important contributions, particularly in the neglected and important area of iconographic studies. To date, however, the most extensive monographic study on a particular aspect of Bāmiyān is Tarzi's doctoral dissertation on the architecture and architectural decoration published in 1977. Tarzi appears to suggest that the majority of the caves at Bāmiyān were constructed between the sixth and ninth centuries. However, the restoration of the small Buddha seems to have followed the construction of the large Buddha, which he dates to 580-632, while he dates the paintings in the vault to A.D. 600-620¹⁶.

In the colossal niches the paintings are considerably later than the sculpture since, according to Tarzi's conclusion, the paintings in the 38-meter Buddha niche belong to the latest group of paintings at the site¹⁷. The discussion of the painting is sketchy and difficult to follow. For instance, he offers an extremely original interpretation, but it is not clear why both Hephthalite and Turkic princes should be represented together as divinized royalty in the paintings of the 38-meter Buddha niche¹⁸. The analysis of the rock-cut architecture and its decoration is most useful. Contrary to Hackin, Tarzi proposed that painted decoration succeeded stucco and that the earliest caves (sixth-seventh century) are in the neighborhood of the 55-meter Buddha and the latest in the center of the cliff area, E and J, and to the eastern end, A, B, F, and G date as late as the eighth and ninth centuries¹⁹.

In 1976 Akira Miyaji published two articles on the chronology of wall painting at Bāmiyān. It is interesting to note that while we were ignorant of each other's studies we both identified the same paintings from Central Asia as providing formal relationships with a number of paintings from Bāmiyān. Miyaji, however, proposes dates in the fifth and sixth centuries, considerably earlier than those which I propose in the following chapters. This difference seems to stem, in part, from the fact that my comparative analysis is based on more recent conclusions established in the current art historical literature²⁰ and is integrated with other historical evidence.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁶ Tarzi, *L'architecture*, p. 126.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

²⁰ A. Miyaji, 'The Wall Paintings in the Niche of West Great Buddha (55 meters Buddha), Bāmiyān'. 'Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān: a stylistic analysis', pp. 17-31. In chapters II and III we will demonstrate that there is no indication that Bāmiyān existed in its present form in the fifth-sixth century. On the contrary it is only from the seventh century that we have a logical historical context for the center.

Despite the important contributions by all these scholars, the problem confronting us remains basically the same as that confronted by Foucher and Hackin — to provide at least a relative chronology for the art of the Hindu Kush. At present, without benefit of scientific excavation or new textual evidence, it is still impossible to establish securely dated points for the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush. Deydier's pessimism with regard to an absolute chronology for the paintings remains valid. However, a new comparative analysis of the art can provide us with a relative chronology and a single historical-cultural context. More importantly, without this coherent historical context, the iconography cannot be properly explained. Conversely, it is the understanding of the function of the art which corroborates the relative chronology of the site. Once the historical context is more precisely defined, one can suggest the picture of the contemporary society and its relationship to the art of the Hindu Kush.

Chapter II

Geographical Description

[On the northeast boundaries of the Hindu Kush]:

This mountain pass is very high; the precipices are wild and dangerous; the path is tortuous, and the caverns and hollows wind and intertwine together. At one time the traveller enters a deep valley, at another he mounts a high peak, which in full summer is blocked with frozen ice. By cutting steps up the ice the traveller passes on, and after three days he comes to the highest point of the pass. There the icy wind, intensely cold, blows with fury; the piled snow fills the valleys. Travellers pushing their way through, dare not pause on their route. The very birds that fly in their wheeling flight cannot mount alone this point, but go afoot across the height and then fly downwards. Looking at the mountains round, they seem as little hillocks. This is the highest peak of all Jambudvîpa. No trees are seen upon it, but only a mass of rocks, crowded one by the side of the other, like a wild forest.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 286)

[On the kingdom of Bāmiyān]:

The people inhabit towns either in the mountains or the valleys, according to circumstances. The capital leans on a steep hill, bordering on a valley 6 or 7 li in length. On the north it is backed by high precipices. It [the country] produces spring-wheat and few flowers or fruits. It is suitable for cattle, and affords pasture for many sheep and horses. The climate is wintry, and the manners of the people hard and uncultivated. The clothes are chiefly made of skin and wool, which are the most suitable for the country. The literature, customary rules, and money used in commerce are the same as those of the Tukhâra country. Their language is a little different, but in point of personal appearance they closely resemble each other.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 50)

The kingdom of Bāmiyān lies in the western continuation of the Hindu Kush mountains, the Koh-i-Baba. This area is described in the *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*:

The western Hindu Kush is a range of lofty mountains which, with its continuation, the Koh-i-Baba, runs like a great vertebral cord through the heart of Afghanistan. The Hindu Kush has its origin in the southwestern corner of the Pamirs, in about longitude 74°38' E, and extends in a generally

westerly direction to about longitude 68°15' E, forming, between those points, the watershed between the Oxus on the north and the Indus on the south¹.

The western Hindu Kush extends eastward to the Khawak Pass, from which the central Hindu Kush continues eastward to the Dorrah Pass (elevation 14,800 feet). This pass is free of snow in the summer, and is considered to be the most accessible route into Chitral, in northwest Pakistan. From Chitral, passes allow access both north to Central Asia, and east to Baltistan (little Tibet), and further to Ladakh² (Map I).

This eastern section has an average altitude of over 15,000 feet, the limit of perpetual snow. The peaks range from 20,000 to 25,000 feet³. To the southeast of the Kilik Pass (elevation 15,000 feet) extends the Mustagh Range in the Karakorum, which 'may be considered a continuation of the [east] Hindu Kush connecting that range with the mountains of Tibet and the Himālayas'⁴. This region is called the Pamirs.

Despite the difficult terrain, a system of mountain passes has permitted a line of travel between points as distant as the Hindu Kush and Chinese Turkestan to the northeast or Tibet to the east. It is these passes, also functioning as 'corridors of communication', that explain a certain degree of cultural unity found throughout this area, despite the ethnic diversity.

The kingdom of Bāmiyān lies in the western section of the Hindu Kush.

The western section, though slightly lower in general elevation than either the eastern or central sections, is still a formidable obstacle to direct communication between the country lying to the north of Kabul and the provinces of Badakhshan and Afghan Turkestan⁵.

Once again, the terrain is difficult, inhospitable to travel, except that the western Hindu Kush has eleven passes that are adequate for caravan travel⁶.

The roads which really connect the political and strategic centre at Kabul [in the Buddhist period, Kapiśa] with Afghan Turkestan and Badakhshan, and therefore with the Russian frontier, are those over the Hindu Kush and no other⁷.

A second geographic factor is the elevation of the western section. At seven to ten thousand feet, it has valleys lower than the other sections of the Hindu Kush, which permitted the cultivation of grain and fruit trees. There were also plentiful summer pasturage and mineral deposits. Ya'qūbī tells us there were copper, iron, and mercury mines.

The Kingdom of Bāmiyān and the Bāmiyān Valley

The boundaries of the kingdom of Bāmiyān are impossible to reconstruct precisely. However, there are literary references to the kingdom that provide us with some information.

¹ *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, p. 175.

² *Ibid.*; see also L. Adamec, *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, p. 82.

³ Adamec, *Historical Gazetteer*, p. 82.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁵ *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, p. 176.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

The Chinese were perhaps aware of Bāmiyān as early as the fifth century, but their interest in the valley was not strong. 'No known pilgrims passed that way before Hsüan-tsang [in the first half of the seventh century]; and Bāmiyān is not mentioned in a way that reveals any detailed knowledge in the parts of the Wei history that reveal contact with the West'⁸.

In addition, none of the important Indian travellers known to have gone to China prior to the seventh century A.D. are known definitely to have stopped at the Buddhist center in Bāmiyān. For instance, we know the route taken by Dharmagupta in the third quarter of the sixth century. He appears to have passed to the east of Bāmiyān (Map 1). This route was also used by Hsüan-tsang on his return voyage to China travelling via Kapiśa, Badakhshan, and Wakhan to Tash Kurgan and Kashgar and hence on to China⁹. This may also have been the route followed by Jinagupta in the middle of the sixth century. There is no contemporaneous record of his having been in Bāmiyān. Thus, the legend that Jinagupta descended from a king of Bāmiyān, who himself descended from a prince of the Śākya family from Kapilavastu would appear to be a later fabrication. In fact, Jinagupta was born in Puruṣapura (Peshawar)¹⁰.

Although Bagchi says in the beginning of his important study that 'Bāmiyān had risen to be a great centre of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Christian era', this assertion is not documented¹¹.

The primary contemporary texts for a study of the early medieval geography of the kingdom of Bāmiyān are in Arabic and Chinese. Unfortunately, the Arabic sources contain little direct information about the kingdom of Bāmiyān during the period of this study, the seventh and eighth centuries. The Muslim historians were mainly concerned with the political and military activities between the Arabs and local leaders. It is difficult to reconstruct the historical geography of the kingdom from accounts of military manoeuvres and the shifting alliances between these local princes and the Arabs, most of which occurred in areas to the north and southwest of the Bāmiyān Valley.

Throughout the Islamic period until today, the Bāmiyān Valley continued to be the administrative center for the western Hindu Kush, but the direction and extent of the dependent lands appear to have varied in each period. Ya'qūbī writing ca. 891, listed Bāmiyān as part of Ṭukhāristān. Iṣṭakhrī, ca. 951, associated Bāmiyān with the regions to the south, Parvān (Kapiśa), Kabul, and Ghazni¹². The kingdom of Bāmiyān included four or five major cities in addition to Bāmiyān. They are known as: Bashurfand, Lakhrab, and Sakivand (only the last is still known and identifiable)¹³. In the early seventh century, Hsüan-tsang tells us that the customs of the people, as well as the language and monetary system of Bāmiyān, were closely related to Ṭukhāristān.

During the pre-Islamic period, the Chinese literary sources are the most significant for information on the boundaries of Bāmiyān. The exact territory defined by

⁸ A. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, p. 270. For possible earlier references to Bāmiyān, see M. Marquart, *Wehrot und der Fluss Arang*, p. 36; A. Soper, 'Review of *Chinese Monumental Art*, by P.C. Swann', p. 284; and note 76, Ch. III.

⁹ P. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰ E. Chavannes, 'Jinagupta', *T'oung Pao*, ser. II, vol. VI, 1905, p. 336.

¹¹ Bagchi, *India and China*, p. 10.

¹² Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 103; al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wa 'l-Mamālik*, p. 227.

¹³ E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux*, p. 162; M. Marquart, *Ērān-šahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i*.

the Chinese administration as the kingdom of Bāmiyān is difficult to ascertain. The later description in the *T'ang-shu* generally coincides with the description by Hsüan-tsang and tells us that to the north of Bāmiyān was Juzjan; to the southeast, Kapiśa; and to the southwest, Arachosia.

Fan-yen (Bāmiyān) is also called Wang-yen, or also Fan-yen-na. It is at the side of the mountains Se-pi-mo-yun. To the northwest it touches on Hou-che-kien (Juzjan); to the southeast it is bordered by Ki-pin (Kāpiśa); to the southwest is the Ho-ta-lo-tche (Arokha). It is a boundary of T'ou-ho-lo (Tokharestan). This country is cold: the inhabitants live in caves. The King's capital is the city of Lo-lan; there are (in this Kingdom) four or five large cities. A river (the Kunduz) flows toward the north and joins the river Ou-hou (Oxus)¹⁴.

We might add that the Helmand River, the most important river in southern Afghanistan, originates in the mountains to the east of Bāmiyān, and flows in a southwesterly direction.

More revealing than the T'ang annals is the testimony of the Far Eastern pilgrims, who actually travelled through the countries they described. Hsüan-tsang's accurate and perceptive account, the *Si-yu-ki*, remains the most useful for modern historians.

Hsüan-tsang provides us with three facts from which, in conjunction with other data, we can hypothesize possible boundaries for the kingdom of Bāmiyān (Map 1): the points at which he entered and exited the kingdom, and the dimensions of the kingdom, about eighty by four hundred miles.

Hsüan-tsang is particularly helpful in ascertaining the northern boundary. One can determine that he entered the kingdom after travelling about 120 miles from Balkh. His course took him along the Balkh River, and presumably he passed through Aq-Kupruk and the Dara Yusuf¹⁵.

However, a more strategic boundary would have been the Kara Kotal, a pass further to the north. In this case, the territory would correspond to the dimensions which Hsüan-tsang gives for the kingdom of Bāmiyān. From the Kara Kotal the two routes to Ṭukhāristān could be controlled: one via the Dara Yusuf to Balkh; the other via the Khulm River to Nigār (formerly Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan), Haibak, Tash Kurgan, and also Kunduz. The northeastern boundary may even have extended farther than the Kara Kotal.

Although the cultural influence of the kingdom may have extended north to Haibak, it is doubtful that the political influence of the king of Bāmiyān extended further north than the Kara Kotal (Map 1). The several Buddhist sites that have been identified along the Khulm River route appear to be contemporaneous with Bāmiyān and suggest a common culture. In fact, paintings have been found at Nigār that are close in style to those found at Bāmiyān. It is likely that the culture of the Hindu Kush extended at least as far as Haibak by the eighth century. Haibak, defended to the north by the Khulm Gorge, is the next defensible city along this route. However, Haibak, called Si-mi-yen by the Chinese, was considered by them as a separate administrative center¹⁶.

There is no information indicating the western boundary of the kingdom. However, it probably included at least the present district of Yakaulang (drained by the Band-i-Amir or Balkh Rivers), with its fertile valleys and high pasture lands.

¹⁴ Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 161.

¹⁵ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁶ Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 275.

The southern extension of the kingdom of Bāmiyān is also difficult to determine. However, as the Bāmiyān Valley lies on the northern slope of the Koh-i-Baba, the range does form a clear natural barrier, and therefore may be considered the southern boundary. Although some sources associate Bāmiyān with Zabulistan.

All sources — literary, archaeological, and numismatic — describe close cultural affinities with Ṭukhāristān but also cultural ties between the kingdoms of Bāmiyān and Kapiśa.

Information on the boundary with Kapiśa assists us in determining the eastern boundary. Hsüan-tsang relates that he travelled fifteen days to the east before exiting the kingdom of Bāmiyān and entering into Kapiśa, which had the Snowy Mountains (Safed Koh) to the north and the Black Ranges (Siah Koh) on the other sides. Archaeological evidence indicates that the capital of Kapiśa was in the area of Begram, which is southeast of present Charikar. In order to reach the capital, Hsüan-tsang would have continued in a southeastern direction. The Paghman Mountains would have been behind him (or, to the west of Kapiśa) and the Hindu Kush still to the north. Although Hsüan-tsang states that he entered the kingdom of Kapiśa after travelling fifteen days to the east, he does not indicate precisely where that point of entry was. However, his route must have been through the Ghorband Valley, as this route is the only one which follows an easterly direction, and is the most accessible route during winter. Thus, it is likely that the end of the Ghorband Valley would have been the boundary between the kingdoms of Bāmiyān and Kapiśa. This partial eastern boundary of the kingdom of Bāmiyān is approximately where the Ghorband-Bāmiyān road leaves the mountain and enters the valley through which runs the present Kabul-Salang road.

The eastern boundary of the kingdom extended at least to the Khawak Pass to the north of Kapiśa, the natural eastern limit of the western Hindu Kush¹⁷. If we consider the eastern and western boundaries of the kingdom to have been, respectively, the Khawak Pass and the district of Yakaulang, the length of the kingdom is still only about half that indicated by Hsüan-tsang. It is possible that the kingdom's territory continued along the central Hindu Kush, in the direction of Chitral in northern Pakistan, and formed the southern boundary of ancient Khuttal (modern Badakhshan)¹⁸. If the kingdom of Bāmiyān did include both the central and western ranges of the Hindu Kush, then the border might have extended from Khuttal westward to the Yakaulang district. There are two reasons for such an hypothesis. First, the size of the kingdom would then roughly conform to Hsüan-tsang's description. Second, the size of the kingdom would now be large enough to attain the prosperity and military strength attributed to it by Hsüan-tsang in the seventh century, and Hui-chao in the eighth century¹⁹. Although the economic prosperity of the kingdom is attested to by the extensive Buddhist establishment, the military role of the kingdom, as we shall see, is not corroborated by other sources. Indeed, Hsüan-tsang, who is generally considered a more reliable guide, testifies to the superior military strength of Kapiśa.

¹⁷ Adamec, *Historical Gazetteer*, p. 82.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 62-63 and p. 82. See also T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, p. 278. Watters notes that the capital of Badakhshan might have been around modern Faizabad. This would not be inconsistent with an extension of the Bāmiyān kingdom through the Central Hindu Kush range, south of Faizabad.

¹⁹ W. Fuchs, 'Huei-Ch'ao's Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien um 726', pp. 448-449.

However,

the most important routes which traverse the district are the main Kabul-Turkestan road, via the Shibar and Katar Sum passes; the Kabul-Hajigak and Kabul-Irak roads; and the Yakh-Walang (Yakaulang) Road to Dalat Yar...

(South), the Koh-i-Baba forms a formidable chain... an almost impenetrable barrier.

(With three exceptions) there is no practicable route. Thus, it will be seen that all the roads from the principal passes over the Koh-i-Baba to Kabul unite near Zohak, and the strategic value of the position fully accounts for the ancient prestige of that ruined fortress. The importance of Bāmiyān is therefore due to its position, as a force located there would cover the group of passes mentioned above, and would command the main route from Turkestan to the Afghan capital²⁰.

Thus, whoever commanded the Bāmiyān Valley and the fortress at Zohak controlled the main route from Central Asia and northern Afghanistan to the capital city south of the Hindu Kush — whether it was Kapiśa in the Buddhist period, or Kabul during the Islamic period. Both in terms of military defense and accessibility to trade routes, Bāmiyān occupied a unique position.

High mountains to the north and east of the Bāmiyān Valley formed a natural defense against the Muslim armies. An important route through Bāmiyān traversed the Aq-robot Pass at the western end of the valley. But caravans were not limited to this one route. When security demanded, the western pass could be closed and travel diverted through the other routes which crossed the Hindu Kush via the eastern passes. (Shahr-i-Zohak, the largest of numerous fortifications that were spread across the Hindu Kush, guarded the eastern end of the Bāmiyān Valley and also protected travellers on the route.) It was because of alternative routes such as this that the western Turks continued their profitable 'silk route trade' with China and India, despite the encroachment of the Arabs. Thus, due to its geography, Bāmiyān could simultaneously protect itself militarily and also keep the all-important trade routes open. There were few areas so conveniently situated as the Bāmiyān Valley. Thus, the economic and strategic advantages combined with the relatively temperate climate and good pasturage assured the kingdom a degree of economic stability. The surplus obtained from taxation on trade and possibly mineral exploration could be recycled into the monumental building projects of the kingdom of Bāmiyān.

²⁰ *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, p. 51.

Chapter III

The History of the Hindu Kush and Adjacent Areas

Passing through the Iron Gates we arrive at the country of the Tu-ho-lo [Turkestan]. This country, from north to south, is about 1000 li or so in extent, from east to west 3000 li or so. On the east it is bounded by the T'sung-ling mountains, on the west it touches on Po-li-sse (Persia), on the south are the great Snowy Mountains, on the north the Iron Gates. The great river Oxus flows through the midst of this country in a westerly direction. For many centuries past the royal race has been extinct. The several chieftains have by force contended for their possessions, and each held their own independently, only relying upon the natural divisions of the country. Thus they have constituted twenty-seven states, divided by natural boundaries, yet as a whole dependent on the Tuh-kiueh tribes (Turks).

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 36-38)

With regard to the character of the people [of Turkestan], it is mean and cowardly; their appearance is low and rustic. Their knowledge of good faith and rectitude extends so far as relates to their dealings one with another. Their language differs somewhat from that of other countries. The number of radical letters in their language is twenty-five; by combining these they express all objects (things) around them. Their writing is across the page, and they read from left to right. Their literary records have increased gradually, and exceed those of the people of Su-li. Most of the people use fine cotton for their dress; some use wool. In commercial transactions they use gold and silver alike. The coins are different in pattern from those of other countries.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 38)

The Hindu Kush traditionally was considered the most prominent part of the western boundary of the Indian and the eastern frontier of the Iranian cultural spheres¹. Eastern Afghanistan, however, from the Hindu Kush south to Ghazni, 'may be considered an offshoot of the Bactrian Iranian area, but both were situated in a predominantly Indian cultural area'². Thus, the Hindu Kush culturally belonged to the eastern Iranian world, but was under constant Indian influence.

¹ R. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, pp. 44-45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

While its traditions were formed by many of the same influences that also affected the rest of the eastern Iranian communities to the north in Central Asia, Indian culture contributed not only Buddhism, but also Hinduism, and to a lesser degree, other Indian religions such as Jainism. In the early medieval period, the changes in Buddhism, affected by Hinduism, are noticeable throughout eastern Afghanistan, as in contemporary India.

The art of the Hindu Kush previously had been dated from the second to the seventh centuries A.D., and was considered a hybrid of Central Asian, Indian, Gandhāran, and Sasanian styles, with the Sasanian tradition predominating because of the presumed political and cultural dominance of that Iranian dynasty. However, a comparative formal analysis allows us to redate the art of the Hindu Kush to the late and post-Sasanian period, from the early seventh to the ninth centuries. Further, the strongest artistic parallels during the first phase of Buddhist art in the Hindu Kush are to the art of Central Asia; while in the second phase, during the end of the seventh century proceeding through the eighth century, the art becomes more associated with that of the mountainous regions of northern Pakistan and northwest India. The historical importance of the art of the Hindu Kush derives from its relation to the Śāhi art of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the continuity of this artistic tradition in historical northwest India and the western Himalayas through the eleventh century.

Historical and Geographical Background

One may consider the artistic culture of Bāmiyān as Indo-Iranian. While the religious iconography derived from Indian art, courtly themes seem to have derived more from the eastern Iranian cultural area; that is, from the art and institutions of western Central Asia. It is the appreciation of this fact which has led some earlier researchers to the hypothesis of Sasanian or Hephthalite (seen as an Iranian people) patronage of the art of Bāmiyān. While parallels to Central Asia are exceedingly important in the analysis of the art of the Hindu Kush, we must also keep in mind the distinctive regional features conditioning the culture of Afghanistan: the existence of geographically defined regional states, a multilingual and multiethnic population, and the importance of the trade routes as unifying factors.

At the time of the Kuṣāṇa migrations, the present Soviet Central Asia and north Afghanistan (i.e. eastern Iran) were populated largely by Iranian-speaking peoples. Numerous similarities can be identified in the arts of western and eastern Iran. The art of Central Asia during the fourth through seventh centuries A.D. was greatly affected by the Sasanians. Iranian cultural influences spread as far as China by way of the extensive trade network dominated by Iranian merchants particularly Sogdians. This influence was then reinforced by migration eastward of some of the Sasanian ruling class in the middle of the seventh century after the destruction of the Sasanian dynasty by the Arabs. Evidence for the influence of Sasanian culture and the regional cultures of eastern Iran can be seen in the seventh and eighth centuries art from all the sites of Central Asia.

From an early date, the peoples of Central Asia absorbed and transformed the Iranian elements, including those from Sasanian culture, until eventually, a distinctive Iranian Central Asian artistic tradition evolved. In earlier scholarship, the Iranian Central Asian forms had not been differentiated from their Sasanian prototypes. In this regard, the art of Afghanistan can be considered representative of

Central Asian art, particularly in its mixture of those traits resulting from the influences of Iranian secular arts, and the religious heritage of India³. A factor which has not yet been considered is the impact of the political ideology of the western Turks. The art of the kingdom of Bāmiyān, like that of the other Central Asian centers, is also the product of a regional feudal tradition. The area today called Afghanistan, with its extreme geographic conditions and multiethnic population, usually had been divided into smaller administrative units. These geographically defined regions have remained largely the same until today.

Sasanian art, on the other hand, was above all an imperial art. Iran had a long tradition of administering vast imperial territories by means of a highly stratified military and bureaucratic system. Hence, we see that historically there has been an imperial system in western Iran and a feudal system in eastern Iran (western Central Asia and Afghanistan). Thus, each tradition had its own distinctive ideological base with the result that each tradition developed its own independent visual themes reflecting the two different economic and political orientations.

The Hindu Kush divides Afghanistan into distinctive geopolitical zones. In the seventh and eighth centuries, these zones are identified as: Ṭukhāristān, Kapiśa-Kabul, Zabulistan, Badghis (the Herat region), and the Hindu Kush. These regions have always been connected by corridors used for both trade and military purposes. In the medieval period the entire region was not successfully united under single rule until the Ghaznavids.

There were two independent trade routes through Afghanistan; one from the northwest, and the other from the northeast. Trade along these routes prospered during periods of political unity, such as under the Kuṣāṇas in the first to fourth centuries A.D. However, later, during the late seventh through eighth centuries, the control of the two main trade routes was bitterly contested in conflicts between the Arab and the local armies — the latter led either by the Hephthalites or by Turkic princes⁴.

The Arabs gained and maintained control of the western trade route, which was accessible from both Iran via Herat and western Central Asia via Merv, from their initial conquest ca. A.D. 682. This route proceeded south from Herat to Farah and then east to Sind via Nimruz in the Seistan, and ultimately connected the Mediterranean Sea to India. Although today the Seistan is desolate, the contemporary texts and archaeological remains⁵ indicate that in medieval times the inhabitants of the Seistan had developed a complex system of irrigation and retaining walls that held back the moving sands. However, because of wars, failing economy, and depopulation, these systems were not adequately maintained. As a result, the cities, which had bordered the trade routes as late as the seventeenth century, today lie submerged under the desert dunes.

The eastern route, which connected Afghanistan with India and Chinese Turkestan, entered Afghanistan from Badakhshan or Termez; one route went from Badakhshan to Kunduz, then to Bāmiyān, Kapiśa-Kabul, Laghman, and the Khyber Pass; or from Bāmiyān to Ghazni, and the Khost Pass. Earlier, Termez, north of Balkh, had been an equally important point of entry to Ṭukhāristān. This route, as described by al-Bīrūnī⁶ offered the most direct access to India from western Cen-

³ A. Belenitsky, *Central Asia*, pp. 209-214.

⁴ M. Shaban, *The 'Abbāsid Revolution*, pp. 59-60.

⁵ K. Fischer, D. Morgenstern, and V. Thewalt, *Nimruz: Geländehegehungen in Sistan 1955-1973 und die Aufnahme von Dewal-i Khodaydud*.

⁶ Alberuni's *India*, p. 118.

tral Asia. In addition, the Badakhshan route, though considerably more difficult, could be one of the most protected corridors between China and India. Hence, the Turks, who controlled the eastern routes and most of north-east Afghanistan and western Central Asia, also controlled the lucrative trade between China and India in the late sixth through early eighth centuries. This economic base assisted the local Turkic princes in their long and continuous struggle against the Arab armies. It has, in fact, been suggested that the pattern of Arab military campaigns in north-east Afghanistan in the early eighth century was partly motivated by the Arab's desire to control this lucrative trade⁷.

The critical factor for the Chinese in the region, as for the Arabs and the Turks, was international trade. Much of the history of Central Asia during the sixth to eighth centuries can be seen as resulting from conflicting needs and demands related to the long-distance trade. The most famous of the luxury goods relayed the length of the exchange system was silk. Thus, in the West during recent centuries, these routes have been incorrectly known as the 'silk routes'.

It is not known how the Turks operated the silk trade⁸ except that the role of the western part of the Turkish Empire was to sell the silk while the eastern Turks actually acquired the silk from the Chinese. The Turks traded to the Chinese, or to use the Chinese terminology, 'gave the Chinese in tribute' their famous horses and other surplus livestock in exchange for silk. There were of course other commodities traded, and in some cases there was direct exchange between the Chinese and representatives from the 'western countries' as is indicated by the record of numerous 'diplomatic' missions to the Chinese court. For both the Chinese and the Turks, the military, diplomatic, and trading activities were all interconnected.

It can be argued that it was only when the Tibetan and Arab inroads into Central Asia had disrupted the centuries old trade between China, India, and the Mediterranean that China played an offensive role in the region. In A.D. 747, the Chinese conducted a daring campaign across the Karakorum into Bolor, ostensibly in defense of Kashmir against the Tibetans⁹, but undoubtedly motivated by a desire to protect their trade and military colonies in adjacent Chinese Turkestan.

Thus, in Afghanistan by the early eighth century, there developed two opposing cultural and political systems along the two main trade routes. The Arabs, who controlled the western route, were also able to gain control over the sea routes in the Persian Gulf. The confederation of non-Muslim rulers, under the nominal leadership of the western Turks, dominated the eastern trade route with Bāmiyān as the city furthest to the west on this route. The economic interdependence of the cities along this latter trade route and their increased political and military cooperation against their mutual enemy, the Arabs, partially explains the emergence of many shared cultural elements that occurred during the Turkic period in the entire region from Kunduz to Ghazni.

One of the most important factors affecting the cultural history of Afghanistan is the complex ethnic and linguistic composition of the population. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient information to be able to chart the demographic changes in Afghanistan through the medieval period. Nor can we ascertain the ethnic composition of either the general population or the ruling class of the Hindu Kush in the

⁷ Shaban, *The 'Abbasid Revolution*, pp. 48, 59; 124-127.

⁸ L. Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads*, p. 40. See Ecsedy, 'Trade and War Relations between the Turks and China in the Second Half of the 6th Century', *Acta Orientalia* 21, 1968.

⁹ A. Stein, 'A Chinese Expedition across the Pamirs and Hindu Kush, A.D. 747', pp. 112-131.

seventh and eighth centuries. The successive migrations of nomadic peoples from the north eventually transformed Ṭukhāristān (today called Turkestan, literally 'land of the Turks') in northern Afghanistan from a region predominantly inhabited by Iranian people to one dominated by Turco-Mongol peoples. In the seventh century A.D., Iranian peoples still dominated the population¹⁰, ruled by Turkic and Hephthalite princes.

The ethnic identity of the Hephthalites remains a question. Although some scholars consider the Hephthalites, like the Chionites, to have been of the Altaic language group, they were distinct from the Turks, who were also Altaic-speaking peoples. Other scholars consider them to have been Iranian-speaking people¹¹.

Chronologically, the Chionites were the earliest 'Huns' to come to eastern Iran, and are mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus ca. A.D. 350¹². The Hephthalites belonged to the next phase of nomadic invaders from Central Asia, and were first recorded in combat with the Sasanians in A.D. 454¹³. There is the possibility that they may have been indigenous to Badakhshan. The important point is that '[...] they [the Hephthalites] appear in the Hunnic phase of the history of Central Asia [...] but, adopted the predominantly Iranian culture of their predecessors the Kushans'¹⁴.

After A.D. 557 the Turks had become the dominant military power in Ṭukhāristān. Around the late sixth century, some groups of them moved south of the Hindu Kush. Despite the military importance of the Turks, the Iranian aristocracy continued to play an important role in administration¹⁵. During the first phase of a conquering nomadic people's, such as the Turks', adjustment to urban life, it is not uncommon for them to assimilate with the existing administrative system. Also, the different ethnic groups intermarried and merged, just as in Afghanistan today. Turkic rulers seemed to have replaced the Hephthalites in many principalities, although the latter did remain in western Afghanistan and Badakhshan and perhaps in other regions as well; the sources are often contradictory on this point. While some scholars believe the Arab sources used the designation 'Turk' indiscriminately¹⁶, others have attempted to demonstrate that the Arab historians actually were extremely careful in distinguishing the different Turkic tribal groups¹⁷.

A more detailed study of the ruling elites in Afghanistan would have to attempt to differentiate between the Hephthalite and Turkic rulers. The problem of distinguishing between these two groups is not confined to modern scholarship, even contemporary sources appear to confuse them. This confusion can be attributed to the fact that both the Turks and the Hephthalites inhabited the eastern Iranian cultural sphere and thus shared a number of superficial cultural traits. One of these, certainly, was multilingualism. A number of languages were used by members of these groups, depending on the situation — perhaps an Iranian language for trade, a Turkic language for military situations, and an Indian language in Buddhist con-

¹⁰ Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, p. 38.

¹¹ Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, p. 66.

¹² Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, p. 38.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁶ C.E. Bosworth, 'Ubaidallāh b. Abī Bakra and the "Army of Destruction" in Zabulistān (79/698)', p. 30.

¹⁷ E. Esin, 'Tarkhan Nizak or Tarkhan Tirek? An Inquiry Concerning the Prince of Badghis Who in A.H. 91/A.D. 709-710 Opposed the "Omayyad Conquest" of Central Asia', p. 324.

texts. (A similar situation prevails today in northern Afghanistan where it is not uncommon for a male Turcoman to speak Turcoman, Pashtu, and Persian). Through the process of sedentarization and particularly as a result of the adoption of Buddhism, many of the customs of the Turks must have come to resemble those of the Hephthalites, so that the Chinese observation that the customs of these people (the Hephthalites) are the same as those of the Turks¹⁸ was probably to some degree correct. The superficial cultural similarity between the Turkic and the Hephthalite rulers and their common relationship to the Turkic Yabghu would in part explain the cultural continuity identifiable in the art and coins of all of eastern Afghanistan from the sixth to the eighth centuries.

It is important to note here only that the Chionites and Hephthalites appeared to have been under stronger Iranian cultural influence, while the Turkic peoples evolved more distinctive Central Asian characteristics shared by other peoples of the steppe. It is important to note that in this study the term 'Turk' is used in a most general sense, 'the tribes (alliance of tribes or peoples) of the Turk Empire (552-744) as a whole without respect to their language or to their ethnic characteristics'¹⁹.

Sources for the Study of the History of the Hindu Kush

The sources for the study of the history of the Hindu Kush from the sixth to the eighth centuries are extremely scarce and often contradictory. Due to the lack of adequate literary evidence, historians still cannot define the cultural and political forces that affected eastern Afghanistan from the fifth century. The only written documents that have been found from this period in Afghanistan are fragments of Buddhist texts and a few random phrases written on stone or on clay pots.

The most significant literary documentation about Afghanistan during this period is contained in the Kashmiri, Arab, and Chinese literary sources. The Kashmiri and Arab sources are historical and geographic accounts and the Chinese sources are both court annals and contemporary travel accounts by Buddhists on pilgrimage to India.

Textual sources, particularly the firsthand evidence of Buddhist pilgrims, are unanimous in identifying the political and cultural importance of the Turks in the area extending from western Turfan to the Indus and to the east as far as Kashmir. Hsüan-tsang, in the second quarter of the seventh century, reports that the Turks were in power from Chinese Turkestan (Turfan) to Kapiśa, including the mountainous regions of the kingdom of Bāmiyān. Under the overlordship of the Turkic Yabghu, a strong military alliance of the non-Muslim rulers existed. There is no evidence for direct rule by the Turkic Yabghu, rather, the system of local regional rule continued.

Kashmiri sources noted the weakening of Turkic authority in northwest India.

¹⁸ Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 158. This observation occurs in a document of the mid-eighth century.

¹⁹ H. Ecsedy, 'Trade and War Relations between the Turks and China', *Acta Orientalia* 21, 1968, p. 151, note 1. This definition has two advantages: it provides a realistic latitude in dealing with the slim and often contradictory primary sources, and it conforms to the Chinese term t'u-chüeh ('Turk'), which usually referred generally to the subjects of the Turks. A similar use of the designation 'Turk' is found in Arabic sources. See M.A. Shaban, *Islamic History: a New Interpretation*, Vol. 2. A.D. 750-1055 ca. H. 132-448, p. 63; see also Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, p. 38-39.

The Kārkoṭa dynasty of Kashmir, whose first king Durlabhavardhana came to power about A.D. 602,²⁰ gradually became the dominant power in an area henceforth referred to as greater Kashmir, which stretched from eastern Afghanistan to Ladakh, and south to Taxila. Hsüan-tsang gives evidence for the Kashmiri movement to the west and south in the first half of the seventh century. According to Kalhaṇa, by the end of the seventh century, the Turki Śāhi in Pakistan were incorporated into the Kārkoṭa Empire, where they held significant administrative positions²¹. We do not know how independent these Śāhi princes were, but there is evidence which indicates the political importance of the Śāhi in the seventh and eighth centuries²². Inscribed bronze sculptures and manuscripts testify to Buddhist artistic activity in Gilgit²³. During this time the Tibetans and the Arabs continuously threatened the Kashmiri, eventually forcing them into an alliance with the Chinese.

Kalhaṇa, writing in A.D. 1148-1150, gives numerous examples of Lalitāditya's, the most powerful of the Kārkoṭa kings, interaction with the Turks in the early eighth century²⁴. Unfortunately, the only historical facts which can be drawn from Kalhaṇa's statements are that Lalitāditya's armies conquered the Turks, and incorporated the nobility into his administrative system²⁵. Lalitāditya's main advisor, Caṅkuna, was also a Turk. He is considered to have been an important patron of Buddhist art. Tāranātha, writing in the sixteenth century, states that a king of Kashmir built 'caityas' in Ghazni and Tukhāristān during the Kārkoṭa period in the seventh and eighth centuries. This is supported by the contemporaneous authority, the Buddhist pilgrim Wu-k'ong (writing 751-790)²⁶. Thus, we can conclude that there was some cultural and political interaction between the Turks and the Kashmiris, certainly during the seventh and early eighth centuries, and possibly also in the late sixth century. Further, the same élite patronized Buddhist establishments from eastern Afghanistan to Kashmir. A visual analysis in Part II establishes that a common style emerged in this region during the seventh through the eighth century. Thus both art and literature testify to common patronage and religious concerns during this period throughout the region.

We know that the political authority of the Turks was significantly weakened following the defeat by the Chinese of the Eastern Turks by A.D. 650 and the Western Turks in 659²⁷. As a consequence, the Chinese became the nominal overlords of much of Afghanistan with Kucha as the supposed administrative center for the kingdom of Bāmiyān. As late as A.D. 718, an entry from the T'ang annals reports that the younger brother of the Yabghu of the western Turks tried to regain his lost prestige at the Chinese court by claiming his brother to be the overlord of Zabulistan, Kapiśa (Kabul was still presumably included in Kapiśa), Bāmiyān, and all the other territories of eastern Afghanistan²⁸. In 751, the Arabs, after hav-

²⁰ J. Naudou, *Buddhists of Kaśmīr*, pp. 21, 266.

²¹ *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, Book IV, pp. 133-134 and notes.

²² *Ibid.*, sec. iii, p. 89 and Book IV, fn. 211, p. 143.

²³ K. Jettmar, 'Bolor - A Contribution to the Political and Ethnic Geography of Northern Pakistan', p. 427.

²⁴ *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, sec. iii, pp. 90-91.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 143-144 text and notes.

²⁶ *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, p. 211; Wu-kong's reports appear to confirm this view.

²⁷ Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 268; Stein, 'A Chinese Expedition', p. 291.

²⁸ Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 291.

ing destroyed much of the power of the Turkic overlords in their expansion eastward, defeated the Chinese at the battle of Talas, and thus secured western Central Asia for Islam.

In northern Afghanistan at the beginning of the eighth century, the Shēr of Khuttal was the overlord of eastern Bactria, the region east of Balkh to Badakhshan²⁹. At about the same time, the Zunbil/Zanbil/Zhunbil of Zabulistan is recorded as the most tenacious of the Arabs' opponents. He ruled from Ghazni, and his realm included Qandahar and the area westward to the Helmand River³⁰. The envoy from Zabulistan represented the principalities of eastern Afghanistan at the T'ang court at this time. By the end of the eighth century, the balance of power had shifted to Kabul, the capital of the Kabul Śāhi dynasty.

The general historical outline of the Turkic presence in eastern Afghanistan from the sixth to eighth centuries is fairly reliable thanks to the agreement among the different literary sources. It is impossible at the present time, however, to ascertain in greater detail the dynastic chronology, structure of government, and social life in any of the regional states. The problem results not only from the fact that there are only limited literary sources but, more importantly, that this material is difficult to interpret. A major problem for the history of Afghanistan is the confusing series of titles.

During the pre-Islamic period, a variety of titles were used to designate the Hephthalite and Turkic princes of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, no consistent pattern of usage can be established conforming to linguistic, geographic, dynastic, or ethnic criteria. Throughout Central and northeast Afghanistan the title 'Shēr' or 'Shār' is found³¹. In northeast Afghanistan, the title 'Shēr' was applied to the ruler of Khuttal. Three rulers in central Afghanistan also were the 'Shār' of Gharchistan, also called 'Varaz Banda', probably a family name; the 'Shār' of Ghur; and the 'Shēr' of Bāmiyān who was also known as 'Pe' in Chinese sources, perhaps from the Turkic 'Beg'³².

Another group of princes ruling eastern Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan used the title 'Śāh' or 'Śāhi' in their inscriptions found on rocks and on bronze sculptures as well as in manuscripts. In Afghanistan, the 'Śāhi' princes ruled Kapiśa in the seventh century A.D. and also Kabul. On coins we frequently find the title 'Śāh' associated with a Turkic title such as 'Tekin'. The ethnic identity of these rulers is still an open question. Recent finds from northern Pakistan should shed considerable light on the Śāhi rulers of Gilgit and Bolor³³.

There are also a variety of other Turkic titles. Some titles have a rather general usage, such as 'Tarkhan', which was associated with the military aristocracy³⁴. Others have a more specific reference.

The Qaghan or Great Khan as he was sometimes called in western sources, controlled the confederation of Turkic tribes inhabiting the eastern steppe which was the political center of the Turkic Empire. The Yabghu, who was in theory the younger brother of the Qaghan, ruled the western regions. In fact, at times the Yabghu was more powerful than the Qaghan. Although custom and heredity did govern

²⁹ Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, pp. 50-51; Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 200-201, 291.

³⁰ Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, pp. 51-52. The Kings of Kabul and Zabul seem to have had a political and/or familial relationship.

³¹ Ibid., p. 50.

³² Ibid., p. 51; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 303.

³³ Jettmar, 'Bolor', p. 424.

³⁴ W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 385; Göbl, *Dokumente*, vol. II, p. 7.

succession, in practice intratribal dynamics were an important political factor. The sacredness attached to the person of the Qaghan appears to have been a consistent factor and was related to the tradition of ancestral worship among the Turks. The residence of the Qaghan was also the theoretical center of the empire and was located near the site for ancestral worship in the Altai chain near the Ötügen mountains³⁵.

The Yabghu's capital was in Tūkhāristān. 'Shad' was the title of the 'Yabghu's viceroy' and he probably lived in Tūkhāristān³⁶. The 'Tudun' was the official who actually governed, controlled the local kings, and collected the tax and tribute³⁷. Each district had such an official who was either appointed by the Qaghan to govern together with the local king, called 'hie-li-ta' when recognizing Chinese authority, or, as occurred at Tachbend and Hami, the king himself was appointed the 'Tudan'³⁸. As we shall see, this may also have been the case at Bāmiyān.

An important problem for the dynastic chronology of Afghanistan is to relate the individuals identified by these titles in texts with the rulers who issued the extensive series of coins attributable to the region. Unfortunately, it is precisely those coins which pertain to the history of the Hindu Kush in the sixth to eighth centuries that remain the subject of scholarly debate.

One important example is the coins of the 'Napki' kings³⁹. This numismatic legend has been read differently by various scholars⁴⁰ and is included by Göbl in his 'Nspk' series⁴¹ (see below). Earlier scholars attributed these coins to the Hephthalites⁴² but some to Turkic rulers⁴³. Most recently the view has been supported that 'they are coins in the Hephthalite tradition but of the Turkic period of the later sixth and early seventh centuries A.D.'⁴⁴.

Numismatic Evidence for Eastern Afghanistan

Numismatic evidence takes on particular significance because of the meager written evidence. Coins themselves however, do not provide sufficient internal evidence to serve as a basis for a chronology of the period. Archaeological and artistic evidence frequently provides a larger context within which to place the information obtained from the coins.

As stated previously, there are no contemporary literary sources from Afghanistan that present an integrated history of the period. Only fragments of Buddhist texts have survived⁴⁵. Assorted inscriptions on pottery and stone exist,

³⁵ Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads*, p. 43.

³⁶ Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, p. 51.

³⁷ Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 263-264; 52.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 263; some titles wandered far from their original meaning (Göbl, *Dokumente*, vol. II, p. 257).

³⁹ Allchin and Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 251-253.

⁴⁰ R. Frye, 'Napki malka and the Kushano-Sasanians', pp. 116-117; Göbl, vol. I, p. 25.

⁴¹ Göbl, vol. I, pp. 25 and 134.

⁴² For discussion see Allchin and Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p. 253.

⁴³ Esin, 'Tarkhan Nizak or Tarkhan Tirek?', pp. 323-324.

⁴⁴ Allchin and Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p. 253; Göbl, vol. II, p. 256 sees no change in the coins from Bactria despite the conquest of the western Turks ca. 560.

⁴⁵ The bibliography for the textual fragments found in Bāmiyān is given in the footnotes to the Descriptive Catalogue. In addition, the Gilgit manuscripts also provide important information relevant to Buddhism in Afghanistan from the sixth-eighth centuries.

much of which have not been studied as yet⁴⁶. Although recent studies have clarified much historical data found on these coins, many significant details remain in question⁴⁷. Without the assistance of supporting documentation, literary or archaeological, the meaning of the numismatic evidence is often ambiguous. The coins provide little information about the political history of the Hindu Kush, as apparently, the kings of Bāmiyān did not mint their own coins. Perhaps they used coins from Kapiśa-Kabul. Despite the fact that no coin of the pre-Islamic period bears any place name from the Hindu Kush, except those from the town of Andarab, which probably belonged to the ruler of Kapiśa⁴⁸, a critical evaluation of the coins of eastern Afghanistan is essential for a study of its art. The large number of crown types and secular emblemata that appear in the art of the Hindu Kush, have tempted scholars to connect these artistic forms with numismatic prototypes. These attempts to use the coins as a basis for identifying the patrons of Bāmiyān with various Hephthalite or Sasanian rulers have not been convincing due to the lack of corroboration from other sources. There are several problems with this approach to the use of numismatic evidence. First, the attribution of specific coins to rulers, dates, and places depends on a combination of factors including mint marks, obverse legends, portraits, crown types, etc.; all of which contribute to the characterization of a ruler and his culture. As the symbolism of political power was highly specific (e.g., crown types), general similarities drawn between royal emblems in the paintings and on coins are not sufficient grounds for identification of a particular royal patron⁴⁹. The second problem is that numismatists themselves vary considerably in their interpretation of critical elements, such as the legends. Third, the coins of this period apparently did not always reflect political changes.

Ghirshman made the first attempt to identify the patrons of Bāmiyān using numismatic evidence. The Hephthalites, he thought, were the patrons of the Buddhist monuments in the Bāmiyān Valley. He based his conclusions both on elements found on the coins excavated at Fondukistān and also on depictions of crowns found in the paintings at Bāmiyān and Kakrak. Many of these Bāmiyān paintings, Ghirshman believed, could have been created in the seventh century⁵⁰. Through a comparison of crown features in Bāmiyān paintings and numismatic images found at Fondukistān, he concluded that the image represented on the coins discovered in the Fondukistān burial urn represented the ruler of Bāmiyān⁵¹. Ghirshman's careful study, written in Cairo during World War II, suffered from limited resources. It has now been superseded by Göbl's extensive numismatic study. Here, I have chosen to use Göbl's typological organization, which is the most comprehensive study to date⁵².

Like Ghirshman, Tarzi, an Afghan archaeologist, attributes Bāmiyān to Hephthalite patronage but incorporated Göbl's chronology. Tarzi's attributions are based on the similarity of a few isolated elements appearing both in the paintings and on the coins, e.g. the crescent enclosing the trident. In his analysis he often

⁴⁶ Allchin and Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 235-245.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 245-255.

⁴⁸ From the early Islamic period, Andarab becomes an important site associated with the Panjshir silver mines which were always under the control of Kapiśa.

⁴⁹ This method was used with limited success in the study of Sasanian art. There is no objective reason for thinking this method is equally applicable to the art of Afghanistan.

⁵⁰ Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, pp. 131-132.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 29-32. This is nowhere supported by Göbl's study: Göbl, vol. II, p. 227, 314.

⁵² Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte*.

did not take into account the other components of the crown, nor the complete context of their representation. Moreover, related types of information, such as seals and stamps, provide equally important comparisons. The most pertinent example is found in the stamp which is marked three times on a baked earthen jar from Shahr-i-Zohak, the citadel guarding the eastern entrance to the Bāmiyān Valley. On this stamp is a legend which Ghirshman states is in the 'Tocharian' language, and which he reads as 'Bahrām'. He dated the jar to the seventh century A.D. It is unclear what the basis is for this date. In 1962 Göbl could not find this piece. Based on the publication, however, he could definitely conclude that the language was Bactrian, and with a question mark tentatively suggests the fifth century A.D. Ghirshman's sketch is, however, difficult to interpret and is not reliable evidence for chronology or iconography⁵³.

In Göbl's monumental study of the coins of the Hephthalites and related groups, whom he called 'Iranian Huns' (Iranische Hunnen), he refuted Ghirshman's conclusions regarding the patronage of Bāmiyān, as he did not find any coins attributable to the kings of the Bāmiyān Valley⁵⁴. Also, Göbl establishes slightly later dates, A.D. 682-689, for the coins from Fondukistān⁵⁵. Although it is not yet possible to depend on numismatic evidence to provide evidence of patronage or chronology for the art of the Hindu Kush, certain historical coordinates can be established from the coins that provide an historical setting for the art.

All of the Hindu Kush artistic motifs that can be related to numismatic motifs are to be found in Göbl's 'Nspk' group, which he dates from A.D. 460 to 745⁵⁶. The most distinctive features, however, are found on rare issues of coins attributable to Vrahitigin (called also Śri-Śāhi) which may be issues of the Turki Śāhi of the seventh century or later according to Göbl. These visual motifs include the following: the bust three-quarter frontal representation of a royal figure on the obverse in combination with the full face depiction of a deity on the reverse. In the 'Nspk' coins one finds the frontal representation of variants of a triple crescent crown; variations of a crown with a disc contained in a crescent between wings; and depiction of the boar's head emblem. Some of these features in 'Nspk' coins can be seen in the art of the Hindu Kush⁵⁷. Although Göbl does not challenge the dates offered for the paintings in Niche K at Fondukistān and Cave K at Bāmiyān, it is clear that the date of the crowns is later, according to his typology, than the date previously given by art historians to the paintings in which the crowns are represented. The formal and iconographic analysis of the paintings contained in this study (Part II) establishes that the paintings in which the crowns appear date to the seventh and eighth centuries, which coincides with the last period in which the crown type is used on coins.

In the mid-seventh century, the Turkic Yabghu ruling from northern Ṭukh-āristān came under the nominal overlordship of the Chinese who had defeated their confederation. The ruler of Bāmiyān was a vassal of the Yabghu, and there were many shared cultural features with Ṭukhāristān. Political and cultural ties seem also to have existed with Kapiśa-Kabul. Despite the apparent political changes, the coinage from Kapiśa and Kabul, which Göbl treats as a unit, maintained a continu-

⁵³ Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, p. 58; Göbl, vol. I, pp. 239-40.

⁵⁴ Göbl, vol. I, p. 162.

⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 313-14.

⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 50; 71-89. For Vrahitigin issues see Göbl, vol. I, pp. 142-45; Allchin and Hammond, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁵⁷ Göbl, vol. II, pp. 71-89; 266-67.

ous series throughout the seventh century to ca. 720⁵⁸. Features of this coin type survive in northern India until about the tenth century. Soon after 700 the kings of Zabul seem to have briefly gained political domination over Kapiśa-Kabul. By A.D. 750 the Turkic king of Kabul had become the principal power. This ruler may have belonged to the same dynastic house as the one that had ruled a few decades earlier when Hui-Ch'ao reported Turkic princes in power in both Gandhāra and Kapiśa⁵⁹.

According to al-Bīrūnī, the Turkic rulers in Kabul traced their dynasty to Kaniška. The identification of Begram as one of Kaniška's capitals, combined with the continuity of the dynasty ruling from the capitals at Begram (Kāpiśī) and Kabul could explain al-Bīrūnī's statement that the Turks of Kabul ruled the Hindus for sixty generations beginning with Kaniška. In addition, the inference from the Chinese records and the Arab historians, which is also corroborated by the coins, is that throughout this period Kapiśa and Kabul had dynastic connections. Also, a confederation between Kapiśa-Kabul, Zabulistan, and perhaps the Hindu Kush existed at least in the early eighth century.

The Horseman coins of Zabul date to the first half of the eighth century⁶⁰. MacDowell established that the silver Bull and Horseman coins of Kabul and western Gandhāra, dated from ca. A.D. 750 to 1000⁶¹. Further, dirhams, minted in Panjshir from 870 to 891/92, reflect both the brief conquest of Kapiśa-Kabul by the Saffarid Ya'qūb and the Muslim control of the Panjshir silver mines north of Kapiśa during that period. The political hierarchy among these princes is unclear. Some scholars believe the Turki Šāhi ruling from Kapiśa-Kabul may have been the nominal overlords of the entire area of eastern Afghanistan south of the Hindu Kush to ca. A.D. 859⁶².

Archaeological and Artistic Evidence

There is now sufficient archaeological evidence to differentiate tentatively the contributions made by Hephthalite, Turki, and Hindu Šāhi patrons, and to see the shift in the latter's orientation toward the neighboring regions to the east as a result of the Muslim conquests north of the Hindu Kush from the late seventh century. Some of the Turki Šāhi rulers around Kapiśa-Kabul also patronized Hinduism in addition to Buddhism as is well documented by recent excavations.

In Afghanistan, the most relevant archaeological evidence for the period is present at Tapa Sardār in Ghazni; Tepe Maranjān and Khair Khāna in Kabul; Begram III, Shotorak, Paitāvā, Koh-i-Pahlavan, and Tepe Iskandar in Kapiśa; and Haḍḍa in Nangarhar. All these sites show important artistic activity in the sixth and partially also in the seventh century; in addition, at Tapa Sardār and Tepe Iskandar and perhaps also Haḍḍa artistic activity continued into the eighth century. Most important is the Italian excavation at Tapa Sardār because of the stratigraphic evidence which suggests later dates for many of the sculptures unearthed elsewhere. Reevaluation is needed of the stone and unbaked earth sculpture at

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 50, 71, 72.

⁵⁹ Fuchs, 'Huei-Ch'ao's Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien', pp. 444-445, 447.

⁶⁰ D. MacDowell, 'The Shāhis of Kabul and Gandhāra', p. 210.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 208.

⁶² On the political associations of the different regions of eastern Afghanistan, see Al-Iṣṭakhri, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa 'l-Mamālik*, p. 277; D.B. Pandey, *The Shāhis of Afghanistan and Pakistan*, p. 68.

Shotorak, a site close to Begram, the capital of Kapiśa. A significant discovery by the Afghan Archaeological Mission at Haḍḍa, consisting of a painted cave underneath the stūpas of Tepe Shotor, throws light on the later artistic developments at this important pilgrimage center. Evidently new religious movements, similar to those documented in Bāmiyān and Tapa Sardār, appeared also in Haḍḍa.

Distinctive characteristics in the art of these sites during the last period of Buddhist art production can be seen in iconography, material, and technique of manufacture: unbaked earth architectural sculpture often three-fourth or full life size and syncretic and courtly themes in a Mahāyāna context. Although the iconography suggests the impact of a feudal class⁶³, the location of all those centers on major trade routes and adjacent to urban centers, suggests the importance of a mercantile class as well.

The presence of Śaivism is first remarked in about the fifth century in a painting from Dalberjin Kazan Tepe in north Afghanistan. Further evidence for Brahmanical practices from the Turkic period are the Sun Gods from Khair Khana near Kabul, datable to ca. the late seventh century. Hindu temples were found also at Tepe Iskandar, Kapiśa, and at Chegha Serai in the Kunar Valley. There is a steady increase in the importance of Hindu patrons in Kapiśa-Kabul until the rise to power of the Hindu Śāhi at Kabul in the ninth century.

According to Kuwayama⁶⁴, the Buddhist and Hindu art of the late seventh to mid-eighth centuries in Afghanistan and Pakistan shared a common style. As yet, however, no study has attempted to show in what ways Hindu practices affected Buddhist art and practice in the area. An analysis of the finds from Tepe Iskandar and Tapa Sardār may eventually tell us about the interaction of these two religious systems and the syncretic forms which evolved. Buddhist sculptures were in clay and stucco, Hindu cult images were mostly of white marble and of a usually high quality of execution. While Buddhist iconographic forms demonstrated the impact of Hinduism, the Hindu iconography followed the same canonical system employed elsewhere in northwest India at this time. A common style shared by the Hindu and Buddhist arts of the sixth to eighth centuries in Afghanistan suggests the common culture of the two patronage groups.

In the neighboring area to the east, i.e., in north Pakistan, the archaeological evidence shows that Buddhist artistic activity declined through the seventh century. However, there was a resurgence of activity in some Buddhist centers in the eighth century⁶⁵. Within Gandhāra, there is evidence of artistic and devotional activity at all major sites, although the most extensive periods of building and art production were prior to the sixth century. In the eighth century, there seems to have been less artistic activity in Gandhāra than in the regions to the north. According to Wu K'ong⁶⁶, the Western Turks dominated the ruling class in Swat and also Kapiśa. The similarity between the arts of Swat and Kapiśa-Kabul and the Hindu Kush would tend to suggest similar patronage for the arts of these regions.

In the eighth century, there was increased art production in greater Kashmir. A large number of sculptures, both Buddhist and Hindu, from the eighth through eleventh centuries have similar technical, formal, and iconographic characteristics,

⁶³ M. Taddei, *Monuments of Civilization: India*, pp. 111-113.

⁶⁴ Sh. Kuwayama, 'The Turki Śāhis and Relevant Brahmanical Sculptures in Afghanistan', pp. 375-407.

⁶⁵ Ibid.: Gilgit and adjacent areas appear to have been the scene of significant artistic activity at this period.

⁶⁶ S. Lévi and E. Chavannes, 'L'Itinéraire d'Ou-K'ong (751-790)', pp. 377-381.

which led scholars to group them under the term 'Kashmiri Bronzes'. At the present, their historical value is limited due to a lack of supporting archaeological or epigraphic evidence. However, there are cultural data linking Kashmiri art with the Sāhi art of eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan possibly from the seventh until the ninth century.

Elements of Sāhi art may have been transmitted by Kashmiri artists to neighboring areas, such as the western Himalayas, as exemplified in the wall paintings of the earliest chapel at Ta-pho Monastery (ca. 996 A.D.). Essentially, the art of the entire region from the Hindu Kush to Kashmir and the western Himalayas from the seventh to the eleventh centuries is characterized by a distinctive artistic style and by the increasing importance of esoteric iconography. Thus, the artistic evidence shows strong links between the Hindu Kush and the neighboring areas to the east. These artistically documented links were historically important, although the other sources give us only fragmentary information about them.

History of the Hindu Kush in the Sixth to Ninth Centuries

To summarize, literary and numismatic evidence allows us to place the art of the Hindu Kush within the larger cultural context of the Western Turk empire. After A.D. 557 Afghanistan was nominally ruled by the Yabghu of the Western Turks, who was the overlord of a loose confederation of local princes — both Hephthalite and Turkic. From the sixth century, increased artistic activity occurred throughout eastern Afghanistan, and this activity continued through the period of Turkic domination.

The formal analysis of the paintings of the Hindu Kush (Part II) suggests that the art of the Hindu Kush dates from the seventh to the ninth centuries. Neither East Asian pilgrims to India nor Indian missionaries to China have recorded visiting a Buddhist center at Bāmiyān prior to Hsüan-tsang's visit. We may therefore suggest that the artistic activity at Bāmiyān, as well as the other sites of the Hindu Kush can be dated to this time. As discussed above, increased affluence derived from international trade during the time of the western Turks. Particularly important for the Hindu Kush may have been the activities of T'ung-Shih-hu, the Yabghu of the Western Turks from 619 to 630. He was credited with having extended his realm to the borders of Persia in the west and Kapiśa in the southeast⁶⁷. In addition to his energetic pursuit of new markets and the securing of the trade routes, T'ung-Shih-hu, as some of his predecessors, was favorably inclined to Buddhism⁶⁸ and seems to have devoted considerable effort to propagating Buddhism⁶⁹. Thus, the expansion of a major Buddhist pilgrimage center at a strategic location on the trade routes would seem to coincide both with T'ung-Shih-hu's political vision and his personal aspirations. Hsüan-tsang visited Bāmiyān only a few years after the death of this Yabghu. Hence, his statement that the large monastery in front of the main façade at Bāmiyān was built by the previous king may refer to T'ung-Shih-hu, although his vassal, the actual ruler of Bāmiyān may have been intended.

The Yabghu's central concern was the control and maintenance of international trade. In order to police these routes and defend his territory, the Yabghu levied

⁶⁷ Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 24 ff., 52 ff.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 192-193; R. Giroud, *L'empire des Turcs*, p. 115.

⁶⁹ Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads*, p. 4.

a certain number of soldiers from each principality — fifty thousand from the kingdom of Bāmiyān and each of the other states except Zabulistan and Kabulistan, which each had armies of two hundred thousand men⁷⁰.

We have no direct information for the socio-political system in the kingdom of Bāmiyān. However, the indication is that the same structure prevailed throughout Central Asia which has been identified by Russian scholars⁷¹. On the basis of analogy we can propose that the kingdom of Bāmiyān appears to have had an essentially feudal structure, where the *dihqāns* (landed aristocracy who lived in fortified castles) were the dominant class. The merchant class was also important. According to Russian archaeologists, the merchant class did not at this time see themselves in conflict with the landed aristocracy⁷². These local lords (similar to medieval European knights) owed allegiance to the 'king of Bāmiyān', who in turn paid tribute to the Yabghu. In addition, the king was obliged to maintain an army at the disposal of the Yabghu, as has been noted.

In the several Arab sources, none mention the king in active military engagement outside the Hindu Kush. He is mentioned only when the valley is attacked. In other words, aside from the customary role of civil defence, the military role of the king did not warrant, in the view of Arab historians, any further discussion. He is discussed mainly in the context of the three Muslim invasions of the Bāmiyān Valley.

It is not clear from these sources if the ruler of Bāmiyān was Turkic. There is also no evidence that he was Hephthalite as has been suggested⁷³.

We have no contemporary information about the ruling élite of the kingdom of Bāmiyān except from Buddhist sources. This absence of information is in itself significant. As we have seen, Göbl's study indicates that there were no coins minted by the pre-Islamic rulers of Bāmiyān. One rare coin type is known with the title Tarkhan Tudun and is attributed to the early eighth century. While a person possessing this title is identified in Bāmiyān during this period, this Turkic title was apparently not unique to the Hindu Kush. There is, therefore, no necessary correlation between the Bāmiyān personage and the person who minted this coin.

The Tudun was the highest administrative official who was directly responsible to the Turkic Yabghu. In Bāmiyān at least one of these officials was called Tarkhan Tudun, who continued to be important until at least A.D. 737.

If the kingdom, as defined in Chinese sources, dates from this Turkic period, then it is conceivable that the king might have served also as the 'Tudun'. Evidence for this hypothesis may be found in the fact that, after conquering the Turks, the Chinese appointed the king of Bāmiyān as their governor of the region. Göbl has discussed this process of successive overlords granting their own titles to local rulers in order to integrate them into their own administrative system⁷⁴. As the Chinese interest was economic, their primary concern was with stability. Their choice of an administrative official could have been based on precedent. But this is only conjecture. In fact, we do not know the actual status of the Tudun in either

⁷⁰ Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 200-201.

⁷¹ Belenitski, *Central Asia*; Barthold, *Turkestan*; G.M. Bongard-Levin and B. Ya. Staviskij, 'Central Asia in the Kushan Period - Archaeological Studies by Soviet Scholars'.

⁷² Belenitski, *Central Asia*, p. 113.

⁷³ Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, p. 131. Tarzi also favors Hephthalite patronage. Göbl, vol. I, pp. 142-143 says, he finds no support for Ghirshman's attribution of his Em. 208 to the Prince of Bāmiyān.

⁷⁴ Göbl, vol. II, p. 257.

the seventh or eighth centuries. It may be significant, however, that the only numismatic evidence is the rare coin type already referred to which bears the titles Tarkhan and Tudun in Bactrian script, as well as symbols found in the art of Bāmiyān⁷⁵.

We know the king of Bāmiyān was a vassal of the Western Turks. Beyond that his role is difficult to define. According to Hsüan-tsang, an important function of the king was to perform the periodic religious ceremonies for which the Buddhist center was famous. There is no clear evidence that a cult of kings was maintained in the kingdom of Bāmiyān. Rather, it is sufficient to note that in Bāmiyān, Buddhism was allied to the state. An hypothesis concerning the nature of kingship at Bāmiyān and the relationship of the ruling and religious institutions will be elaborated in the final chapter.

The scattered literary sources allow us to construct an historical outline of the kingdom of Bāmiyān from the early seventh to the late tenth centuries. We have a few references from Chinese sources for the seventh and early eighth centuries, and from the Arab sources for the eighth to tenth centuries.

The following chronology can be reconstructed from the data in the T'ang Shu on Bāmiyān and nearby regions and from the Arab sources⁷⁶. In the 620's Bamiyan was part of the territory conquered by T'ung Shih-hu. By 627 a government was established at the capital city, which was called Lo-lan by the Chinese. Lo-lan was the administrative center for the kingdom of Bāmiyān. That same year, the Bāmiyān government sent an ambassador to the court of the emperor of China. Following the defeat of the Western Turks by the Chinese, in 658 the capital of Bāmiyān was made the administrative seat of the government of Sie-fong. At the same time, another town in the district Fo-Shih became the administrative seat of Si-wan⁷⁷. The exact locations of Sie-fong and Si-wan are not given. The king of Bāmiyān himself became the governor of the Hindu Kush, although he was ultimately responsible, in theory at least, to the Chinese officials in Kucha⁷⁸. 'On donna au roi *Pe* le titre de Gouverneur de l'arrondissement de Sie-fong, chargé d'administrer les affaires militaires des cinq arrondissements compris dans sa circonscription'⁷⁹. (One gave to the king *Pe* the title of Governor of the district of Sie-fong, responsible for administering the military affairs of the five districts included in this region.) We can assume that the kingdom of Bāmiyān had been nominally annexed by the emperor of China together with the other provinces that had belonged to the Western Turks. However, the Yabghu continued to control these territories. There is no indication that this change in status, that is, when the Turks became the nominal vassals of the Chinese, produced a noticeable change in the political or social life of Bāmiyān.

In 737, the Tarkhan Tudun⁸⁰ is recorded living in Khuttal (northeast Bactria). In the absence of the local prince, the Tudun took control of Khuttal in northeast Afghanistan, which was adjacent to the northern border of the kingdom of Bāmiyān.

⁷⁵ Ibid., vol. I, p. 168.

⁷⁶ Soper, *Literary Evidence*, p. 270 and fn. 52 has disputed Pelliot's hypothesis that Bāmiyān was recorded in the Chinese sources prior to the seventh century. Marquart, *Wehrod und der Fluss Arang*, p. 36 also believes that Bāmiyān is listed in 615, but this too is uncertain. Chavannes, *Documents*, e.g., pp. 160-162.

⁷⁷ Chavannes, p. 161.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 161-162.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

⁸⁰ M. Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i*, p. 302.

In this slight mention of the Tarkhan Tudun, we may have a reference to a specific ruler of Bāmiyān.

Except for this reference, there is no evidence of a disruption in social life in Bāmiyān at this time. This might indicate an internal squabble, rather than an invasion from outside, as the cause of the Tudun's departure. Thus, the same ruling élite could have continued in power. Or stated another way, although there is evidence for the Tudun's ascension to power in Khuttal, there is no evidence for a change in rule at Bāmiyān.

In contrast to this 'local' explanation, one might also see the Tudun's presence in Khuttal as one of the many repercussions of the regional power struggles going on at that time. By 737, the Kashmiris had expanded control over territories in northwest India, and Tibet had gained control of Baltistan in north Pakistan. The Arabs had significant victories in Central Asia, eastern Afghanistan (such as Kapiśa), and Sind. The Turkic Empire was in disarray. As a result, major changes occurred throughout the area, such as the downfall of at least one of the 'Śāhi' houses, the Poṭala Śāhi dynasty in northern Pakistan. The artistic evidence affirms a cultural relationship between the latter and the ruling élite at Bāmiyān, but the political association is unclear.

Whatever the cause of the Tudun's presence in Khuttal, it would seem that the second quarter of the eighth century marks the end of more than a century of apparent stability in the kingdom of Bāmiyān. From the mid eighth century onward, there are contradictory indications of political upheavals. However, a change in the religious complexion of these areas is often indicative of the disruption following a change in the ruling class. Yet, Bāmiyān remained essentially Buddhist despite Muslim invasions. There were perhaps two invasions between 734 and 785. Although Muslim historians assert that the king of Bāmiyān converted to Islam in the eighth century, we know that Buddhism continued to exist until at least ca. 871, when the Saffārid Ya'qūb conquered the capital⁸¹. Indeed, according to Ghaznavid sources, Buddhism remained in parts of the Hindu Kush until the tenth century. It is not apparent when the final destruction of Buddhism in the Bāmiyān Valley occurred.

Evidence that contradicts this impression of religious continuity is found in a story told by Ya'qūbī. Sometime after 794-795 (he writes), Hṣan, son of Abū Harb Muhammad, who had married the daughter of the Shēr of Bāmiyān after her father's conversion to Islam, conquered the Ghorband Valley. Hṣan was then awarded the title of the Shēr of Bāmiyān, which would have previously belonged to his grandfather⁸².

This story, however, is not sufficient indication that the people of Bāmiyān were permanently converted to Islam in the late eighth century, for by ca. 871 there was again a Buddhist Shēr in Bāmiyān. Thus, it is my contention that despite Muslim invasions, the ruling class in Bāmiyān remained Buddhist through the ninth century. Indeed, in 977 we have the story of yet another conversion of the Shēr of Bāmiyān, this time by the Ghaznavid, Sabuktigīn⁸³.

⁸¹ A good discussion of the conflicting reports of this conversion variously placed between 868 and 872 is given by G. Scarcia, 'A Preliminary Report on the Persian Legal Documents of 740-1078 found at Bāmiyān', pp. 73-75. I am also of the opinion that the gold idols sent to Baghdad in 871 did not come from Bāmiyān.

⁸² Ya'qūbī *Buldan*, pp. 288-290. If all the sources were to be taken literally, we should have — in the ninth century — both Muslims and Buddhists having the title Shēr. Buddhist Shēr of Bāmiyān are reported both in Baghdad and in Bāmiyān at different times in the ninth century.

⁸³ A.A. Kohzad, *Rahnamā-ye Bāmiyān*, p. 14.

Beginning in the second half of the seventh century, the Arab military actions north and south of the Hindu Kush created considerable social and economic stress and undoubtedly were the principal causes of the cultural changes that occurred in the Hindu Kush from the seventh until the tenth century A.D.

Both the overlordship of the western Turks and the international trade seem to have remained important for the kingdom of Bāmiyān throughout the period under consideration. The territory of the kingdom included the major passes through the Hindu Kush so that any power located to the north or south would also need to control the Hindu Kush in order to secure the long distance trade routes.

The longest period of political and economic stability appears to have been from the first quarter of the seventh century (the first diplomatic mission from Bāmiyān to the Chinese court was A.D. 627) through the second quarter of the eighth century, at least A.D. 737. It is precisely to this period that art historical analysis attributes the majority of the wall paintings of the Hindu Kush.

When the Muslim armies brought an end to western Turkic rule and the long distance trade through Bāmiyān, the importance of Bāmiyān declined. In 727, the time of our second and last firsthand description of Bāmiyān by the pilgrim Hui-ch'ao, Bāmiyān was still prosperous, then began a long decline. Bāmiyān may have been attacked at least three times in the subsequent 150 years.

By the time of the final Islamization of Bāmiyān by Sabuktigīn in A.D. 977, Bāmiyān was still a major regional center, but was not considered by some authors, such as Bayhaqī (this section of Bayhaqī is missing but others have used him as a source) or the anonymous author of the *Hudūd al-'Alam*, to be worthy of much comment.

The literary evidence tends to suggest a gradual process of Islamization until the end of the tenth century. It is probable that during most of the ninth and tenth centuries the progressively reduced Buddhist community had neither the means, nor the leisure, to create new artistic complexes. Sometime during this period the Buddhist community covered the wall paintings at Kakrak with a layer of mud to protect them from the Muslims and migrated perhaps eastward to a more protected, though perhaps no more economically stable, home. Although no longer worshipped, the colossal Buddha images and their painted paradises remained to inspire the folk tales⁸⁴ and poetry of the Muslims of the Hindu Kush.

⁸⁴ R. Hackin and A.A. Kohzad, *Légendes et coutumes afghanes*, pp. 20-21.

Chapter IV

Religion in the Hindu Kush and Adjacent Areas

The different schools are constantly at variance, and their contending utterances rise like the angry waves of the sea. The different sects have their separate masters, and in various directions aim at one end.

There are Eighteen schools, each claiming pre-eminence. The partisans of the Great and Little Vehicle are content to dwell apart. There are some who give themselves up to quiet contemplation, and devote themselves, whether walking or standing still or sitting down, to the acquirement of wisdom and insight; others, on the contrary, differ from these in raising noisy contentions about their faith. According to their fraternity, they are governed by distinctive rules and regulations, which we need not name.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 80)

The different forms of Buddhist religion, which we today identify as Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, evolved over many centuries. Determining when these doctrines and disciplines actually originated is impossible; but we can ask when they emerged as identifiable systems.

In India and Central Asia during the seventh and eighth centuries there were no universally understood distinctions between Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhism; and what few clear-cut distinctions there were, were inconsistently applied. The term Vajrayāna was not in use at this time; the delineations between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools were blurred.

The Buddhist Tāntrika scholars and Tibetan historians make little or no clear cut distinction between the Mahāyāna as taught in Mahāyāna Sūtras and Śāstras on the one hand, and the esoteric doctrines and practices expounded in the Tantras and Sādhana, on the other¹.

Although the three traditions interpreted both doctrine (Dharma) and monastic discipline (Vinaya) differently, there were: the common goal of cessation of suffering; the commitment to daily meditation practice as means to attaining Nirvāṇa; and their fundamental relationship to the three jewels (triratna) — the Buddha, the Dharma (universal law), and the Saṅgha (monastic community). The commitment to this relationship is expressed daily by all Buddhists in the Refuge Vow: 'Budd-

¹ L.M. Joshi, *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture of India*, p. 336.

ham śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dharmaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṅghaṃ śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi': I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

Forms of Buddhism: Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna

There are several reliable descriptions that outline differences in doctrine and monastic discipline among the three traditions which should be consulted for a balanced view of the historical development of Buddhism². In the following discussion, I would like only to touch on some of the factors in the evolution of Buddhism in northern India, as they relate to this study. I shall concentrate primarily on the institutional and philosophical aspects that resulted in the divergences between Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna; but as will be seen, we must also consider other factors which are socio-economic in nature.

a) Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna - Exoteric Schools

Hīnayāna (or Nikāya) schools included the earliest institutional forms of Buddhism. Their vinaya (monastic discipline) adhered more strictly than that of the Mahāyāna groups to the early form of Buddhism, which developed in the time of Śākyamuni. Śākyamuni Buddha was not deified by Nikāya schools, but he was considered to be a great teacher.

Mahāyāna ideas were formulated soon after Śākyamuni's Mahāparinirvāṇa, but these ideas did not form an identifiable system until about the first century B.C.³. As well as coincideing of Śākyamuni as a deity, the Mahāyānists also worshipped other deities, particularly the Bodhisattvas, or 'Buddhas-to-be.' A form of devotional worship, called bhakti, focused on all these deities. Behind Mahāyāna worship was the belief that all beings contain the seed of Buddha-nature and can attain enlightenment. Thus, Mahāyāna groups had a broader social orientation than Hīnayāna groups, and made a conscious attempt to appeal to the layman.

This characteristically Mahāyānist trend is foreshadowed in certain late Hīnayāna texts of the Mahāsāṃghika sect. There, also, the idea of the equality of the layman and cleric, as they travel the road to enlightenment, is expounded upon⁴. This is a good example of the blurred delineations between schools with which the student of early Buddhism is confronted.

b) Vajrayāna - Esoteric School of the Mahāyāna

According to Vajrayāna tradition, the esoteric doctrines were taught by the Buddha to a select few, while the exoteric doctrines, the Hīnayāna paths, were taught to the masses. According to its adherents, Vajrayāna is part of the Mahāyāna path.

The earliest literary formulation of ideas associated with esoteric Buddhism is by Nāgārjuna in the middle of the second century A.D. The early Gupta period

² e.g. T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*; J. Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*.

³ Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 77.

⁴ A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*. The process of the evolution of Mahāyāna is brilliantly discussed in Appendix III, notably pp. 304-305.

(third to fifth centuries) was important for the compilation and composition of treatises on many subjects including philosophy, government, and religion. The earliest 'revealed Tantras' were composed in the late fourth and early fifth centuries according to some scholars. Chapters were also added to earlier Buddhist works, such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*⁵. In the late seventh and early eighth centuries, different strands of transmission can be identified; for example, one early Vajrayāna literary tradition was represented by Śāntideva; it was continued by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla in the mid-eighth century. Also, around this time appeared the first Siddhas, or Tantric masters, who were later to become an important phenomenon in Vajrayāna.

Thus, by the seventh and eighth centuries, we can see that a new religious system had arisen. It was a synthesis of late Mahāyāna ideas, yoga, and other concepts of ritual practices. These syncretic ideas became known as Tantric Buddhism and they affected Buddhist practice throughout Asia. This esoteric branch of the Mahāyāna is called Vajrayāna in the Himalayas. Rarely used comparative material is offered by contemporary esoteric institutions in Central Asia, China, and Japan.

Vajrayāna is best known today in the form that was practised in northern India, and which is still practised in the Himalayas. It is as much a philosophical as a religious system. The meditational practices derive from the Hīnayāna mindfulness and awareness techniques. But in addition, considerable attention is devoted to psychology, to practices directed at the unconscious mind, and to the transmutation of the human personality through spiritual practices designed to achieve the goal of Buddhism, ultimate release from the cycle of rebirths, Nirvāṇa. However, in keeping with Mahāyāna tradition, the goal is not personal salvation but that of all mankind.

The concept of kula, or family, and the notion of the Five Buddha Families became an underlying principle of Vajrayāna philosophy as expounded in the most advanced of the Tantras, those of Anuttarayoga. The Five Buddha Families personify the quinary principle by which all the metaphysical and psychological components of man and the universe are organized. Each of the Five Buddhas is the head of a specific family (kula) and presides over one of the five directions. It was this mechanism that allowed for the integration of foreign divinities into the Buddhist hierarchy. The most important visual means of symbolizing the integration of the Five Buddha Families is the maṇḍala.

Interpretations of monastic rules (vinaya) changed considerably in later Vajrayāna institutions. A strict hierarchy developed within the Saṅgha. Most importantly, Buddhist institutions expanded their role in society, becoming even more involved in the spheres of education, economics, and politics⁶.

The role of the Buddhist monk as philosopher, educator, and patron is not defined in ancient Buddhist sources; it is helpful, therefore, to consult the narratives of contemporary observers, particularly Chinese pilgrims travelling through India in the fifth through eighth centuries. In this later phase of Buddhism, we find a cosmopolitan interaction of monks from different schools, inhabiting the same area, debating with each other, and travelling widely.

From early Indian, Chinese, and later Ceylonese sources we know that monasteries associated with Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools accumulated land and dealt in money lending prior to the seventh century⁷. This practice was later

⁵ *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, trans A. MacDonald.

⁶ D.C. Twitchett, 'The Monasteries and China's Economy in Medieval Times'.

⁷ Ibid.; R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, *The Robe and Plough*; Gernet, *Les Aspects économiques*.

expanded and institutionalized within Vajrayāna monasteries in Tibet. By the time of Rin-chen-bZang-po, the founder of many monasteries in the western Himalayas in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, monasteries had established an elaborate financial structure incorporating the lay community⁸. Thus, the political interaction between clergy and layman, which Mahāyāna thought had championed, reached full fruition in Tibet.

The theocratic system that emerged in Tibet was a combination of several factors, in particular an increasing identification between Buddhist and secular institutions, and the ancient Tibetan notion of sacred kingship. These two factors created a distinctive and paradoxical character for Vajrayāna in Tibet. A gap developed between those members of the Saṅgha who were more likely to receive the secret and more advanced teachings, and lay persons although lay persons were not necessarily excluded. A similar gap existed in the Nikāya schools, but for different reasons. According to the Vajrayāna, the attainment of the enlightened mind was aided through practices and teachings orally transmitted from Vajra master to pupil. These masters were the 'lineage holders,' i.e., the repositories of the secret oral teachings. Thus, at the same time that its worldly involvement increased, Vajrayāna's doctrines and practices became more and more esoteric.

Buddhist Art and Doctrine

No satisfactory method has yet evolved for analysing the relationship and reciprocal influences between Buddhist doctrine and art in northwest India and Central Asia. A standard method for determining these relationships and influences is to identify a text likely to have been used by monks at a particular site and then to locate passages in the text corresponding to iconography found at the site. For several reasons, this method yields incoherent results. First, only a small portion of texts have survived, most are not dated and in fact were compiled over a long period of time. At present, evidence suggests two possible situations: (1) that the canonical texts were written many centuries before the art was created; (2) later texts systematized developments in thought and practice, which had been current for a considerable period of time but only within certain factions of Buddhist society. Interpretations of all these texts and the rituals associated with them also changed. This gap between doctrine and practice would have been bridged by oral teaching and some written commentaries. Thus, an historical stage in Buddhist practice or doctrine as preserved today in a text may be considerably earlier or later than the creation of a specific work of art related to that text.

Second, although each group identified with one of the two major traditions (characterized as 'vehicles' or yānas), the actual beliefs and practices of each group are not so easily categorized; in fact ideas were sometimes drawn from traditions other than the one with which the group identified. As if this confusion were not enough, we also find that the doctrines of the schools were not confined to a specific region, nor, initially, even to specific monastic centers. Various Buddhist groups coexisted in the same area, even in the same monastic complexes. Thus, it is very difficult to decide what doctrines were exclusive to which groups.

The impossibility of defining a chronology for the development of Buddhist thought severely limits our ability to establish a concordance between developments

⁸ G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. 2.

in Buddhist doctrine and art. At best, we can say that there are three historical phases to the development of Buddhist art in India. These phases were parallel to but not contemporary with the successive changes in doctrine and monastic organization. But the doctrinal changes and art historical phases, although separated in time, occurred in roughly the same order.

An analysis of three factors allows us to identify these art historical phases. The factors are: (1) the subjects of the art; (2) the composition; and (3) the function of the visual configuration in Buddhist practice. The first phase is clearly distinguishable from the third, but the development that lies between the two is a tangle that does not allow a uniform definition or precise identification with a specific literary or institutional movement.

The earliest phase of Buddhist art is principally concerned with the life of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and his past lives (Jātaka tales and Avadānas). The art is always addressed to the worshipper. The images decorated the sacred architecture in such a way that the worshipper was able to read the didactic message (the progress of Śākyamuni to enlightenment) while ritually circumambulating the monument. The earliest art is aniconic, the Buddha being represented by symbols; later he is represented as a monk and teacher.

In the second phase, narrative images derived from the life and previous lives of Śākyamuni remain important; but the images are now synoptic, and the figure of the Buddha dominates compositionally by virtue of its size and central placement. The subjects and compositions are more uniform than those of the first phase: repeated images of undifferentiated Buddha figures are a common theme. Images of the Bodhisattvas also become increasingly important. The location of these narrative images on stūpas (reliquary mounds) and in monasteries indicates their continued didactic function, as in the first phase.

In the last phase of Buddhist art, narrative imagery is reduced. Although the Buddha image remains most important, there are now several Buddha types as well as Bodhisattvas and other deities. Single cult images which might represent one of many deities form the center of iconic configurations in which direction, color, and hierarchical order are also symbolic components. The most important type of configuration which evolves in this phase is called a maṇḍala. This symbolic representation of time and space is considered to mirror both macro and microcosm, and its symbolism functions on a great number of levels.

We can to some degree demarcate the changes in the choice of artistic subjects and cult figures. The earliest cult image was the stūpa. This was replaced, in part, by worship of the Buddha image, and later the Bodhisattvas. In the last phase, a great number of images of deities, as well as abstract configurations, served as the focus of religious practice, both devotional and meditational.

We can also identify changes in religious practice. But the chronological relationship between these two sets of changes in cult figures and religious practice is unclear. Even though there is general agreement that during the three historical phases of Buddhism — Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna — devotees preferred certain iconographic forms, we cannot during the early medieval period confine any of these forms consistently to one group, one restricted time, or one specific location⁹.

⁹ No attempt has yet been made in Buddhist studies to correlate changes in religious monuments at different periods in time with contemporaneous religious sources which could have served as the basis of religious practice at each of these historical moments.

The problems of deciding the relationship between image and ritual are further complicated by the lack of information about the original architectural function of images. In many cases, very little evidence remains — be it textual or archaeological — concerning the placement of images in their original architectural setting. Some understanding can be gained from modern day Buddhist practice. But a large number of the groups with which we are concerned, such as those belonging to the Mahāsāṃghika, have ceased to exist for many centuries. Their daily practices are unknown.

The development of Buddhist art, as Buddhist thought, was affected by regional traditions which included non-Buddhist elements. Non-Buddhist beliefs were an important part of the spiritual life of the Indo-Iranian borderlands. Hinduism also played a role in the formation of Buddhist art. Thus, I shall consider the art of the Hindu Kush within the context of the general religious culture of this region. These regional artistic traditions will be discussed in Part II. The discussion will follow the general classification of Buddhist art, which usually has been organized both chronologically and regionally. However, I shall also attempt to explain the art of Bāmiyān through the doctrines of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādin. As classification according to sectarian patronage is very difficult, and may be only partially valid, the results of this approach must be seen as tentative.

Archaeological and Literary Evidence for Buddhism in Central Asia and India

All the major Buddhist monasteries of the areas relevant to the Hindu Kush — eastern Afghanistan, Central Asia, and northwest India — were located on trade routes. Interaction with merchants and pilgrims travelling these routes contributed significantly to the character of these monasteries. As components of the same exchange system, these centers had many religious and artistic elements in common, even in centers located quite far from one another, such as those at Bāmiyān and Kucha. Thus, in order to understand local Buddhism and its art, we should examine the evidence for religious activity at Buddhist centers outside of the Hindu Kush, as well as within that area.

a) Swat and Gandhāra

Archaeological evidence is extremely limited for religious practices during the sixth through eighth centuries in the mountainous region of historical northwest India. On the basis of art historical evidence from this period, we can distinguish between the arts of ancient Uḍḍiyāṇa (the Swat Valley north of Peshawar in Pakistan) and greater Kashmir — that is, Kashmir and those culturally dependent regions to the West including those in Pakistan — Balistan, Gilgit, and Hunza. However, there is no archaeological or literary evidence that allows us to distinguish between the religious practices of Swat and greater Kashmir.

Hsüan-tsang tells us that throughout the area both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna doctrines were followed and that he found the Vinaya Piṭaka which belonged to the five sects — Dharmaguptaka, Mahā-Mahīśasaka, Kāśyapīya, Sarvāstivāda, and Mahāsāṃghika¹⁰. One of the most famous examples of Mahāyāna iconography was

¹⁰ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Book III, p. 121.

found in Darel, the ancient capital of Swat, where a colossal image of Maitreya was worshipped. The Chinese pilgrim also thought that in some monasteries Buddhist rituals had decayed into superstition. This is now usually interpreted as evidence of esoteric Buddhist practices. When I-ching discussed Uḍḍiyāna some fifty years later, he claimed that the Sarvāstivādin and the Mūlasarvāstivādin predominated.

Based on the results of field surveys and archaeological exploration, Tucci concluded that there had been an economic decline in Swat, in part due to natural disasters. He considered these experiences partially responsible for the rise of native beliefs and religious practices associated with Shamanism and Hinduism¹¹. These beliefs and practices were in part incorporated into esoteric Buddhism by the seventh and eighth centuries. This development is attested to by both Buddhist sculptures with esoteric themes and sculptures with unusual animal motifs, perhaps of non-Buddhist origin, found at Swat¹². According to Tibetan tradition, during this period Buddhist monks carried esoteric teachings from northwest Pakistan and India to Tibet¹³. This tradition is personified in the legend of Padmasambhava.

Despite archaeological surveys, the Buddhist artistic culture of Swat remains relatively unclear. The Italian missions have unearthed a great many Gandhāran period schist sculptures containing a varied and unusual iconography. The belief systems associated with this iconography have scarcely been explored¹⁴. Jettmar and a team of German-Pakistani researchers are presently surveying the rock-cut engravings and inscriptions along the pilgrimage routes that run from Chinese Central Asia to India via the Indus Valley. The incised inscriptions associated with these engravings may provide an historical context for the art. Further, a comparative stylistic analysis of the rock carvings and bronze sculpture from Swat and greater Kashmir may assist in dating the more extensive Kashmiri artistic remains.

At present, it would appear that we can group the art from Swat into two chronological types — Gandhāran and Śāhi. To date, only art from the Śāhi period appears in the rock carvings. Only this group (ca. seventh to ninth centuries) has esoteric iconographic themes.

Although there has been relatively little research on the sectarian patronage of art from Pakistan, we can associate the majority of the art with late Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna concerns. A few bronze and rock-cut images attest to esoteric Buddhist ideas in the seventh and eighth centuries. It is in this same period that we find the earliest evidence for the basic esoteric themes — the Five Buddha Families and the Vajradhātu maṇḍala — both contained in a bronze stūpa from Swat, presently in the Peshawar Museum¹⁵ (fig. 95).

We have only recently begun to explore another component of the art of Swat

¹¹ G. Tucci, 'Preliminary Report on an Archaeological Survey in Swat,' pp. 281-282.

¹² Ibid., pp. 282-284. Rock engravings in the Gilgit Agency also give evidence of such practices.

¹³ Ibid., p. 280.

¹⁴ D. Faccenna, 'Excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission (IsMEO) in Pakistan: Some Problems of Gandhāran Art and Architecture,' pp. 126-176; Tucci, 'Preliminary Report', pp. 279-328; K. Jettmar, *Die Religionen des Hindukusch*; M. Taddei, 'Appunti sull'iconografia di alcune manifestazioni luminose dei Buddha,' pp. 435-449. This is a good example of several articles by this author attempting to relate iconography with contemporaneous doctrine. See also Faccenna, *Sculptures from the Sacred Area of Buktara I*.

¹⁵ D. Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, p. 54.

— the influence of Chinese art. A few sculptures have been found¹⁶ which reveal Chinese elements; from their characteristic style they appear to have been made in Swat. However, we still know nothing about the date and circumstances of their creation. Studies by Chavannes and others have established the continuous cultural and economic intercourse between China and the western regions during the period of Turkic domination. The impact of this interaction on the art of Pakistan and Afghanistan has never been evaluated. Perhaps further research on the rock art and inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway — traditionally an important route between Chinese Turkestan and Pakistan — will help us define the cultural interaction between China and historical northwest India during the sixth through eighth centuries.

b) Greater Kashmir

As mentioned earlier, I have chosen to use the term 'greater Kashmir' to include Kashmir and the culturally dependent regions to the west, in present-day Pakistan, such as Gilgit, Hunza, and Baltistan.

In Kashmir proper, as in Khotan, literary and artistic sources offer contradictory evidence concerning the presence of various Buddhist groups. Literary sources inform us that the Sarvāstivādins and Mahāsāṃghika, both Hīnayānists, were the most important groups in Kashmir, as well as throughout northwest India¹⁷. Yet, we have found many metal sculptures of a high technical quality in this area that give evidence for the worship of Tantric deities during the seventh and eighth centuries. Although Tibetan tradition considered Kashmir an important source for Tantric themes¹⁸, the local Buddhist pantheon, as it is preserved in the visual arts at this time, was relatively limited compared to the variety of deities found in the literature¹⁹. To add further to the religious complexity, Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite icons, in the same style as the Buddhist images, have been found sufficient to indicate extensive Hindu practice. This same situation existed since the sixth century in eastern Afghanistan.

There has been no systematic publication or critical analysis of the several Buddhist sites that can be identified with the post-Kuṣāṇa period. There have been few scholarly monographs on particular problems of Buddhist art in Kashmir. It is only recently that the first extensive study²⁰ of medieval Kashmiri metal sculpture has appeared. It attempts to define a relative chronology for the sculptures, based on stylistic criteria, and to enumerate the iconographic types found in medieval Kashmiri art. Thus, while we have abundant literary evidence for the contribution of both Kashmiri art and Kashmiri missionaries to the spread of Buddhism, we still know very little about either the chronology of medieval Kashmiri Buddhist art, or its doctrinal affiliations.

It is not yet clear to what degree the religious movements and arts of the adjacent western regions in Pakistan were distinct from those of Kashmir. Recent

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 89; M. Rhie, 'Some Aspects of the Relationship of 5th Century Chinese Buddhist Images with Sculpture from Northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia'; Idem, 'A T'ang Period Stele Inscription and Cave XXI at T'ien-Lung Shan.'

¹⁷ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 162, and mentioned by other Buddhist pilgrims of the period.

¹⁸ Tucci, 'Preliminary Report,' pp. 280 ff.; J. Naudou, *Les Buddhistes Kashmiriens*.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 280-281.

²⁰ P. Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*. Some objects are included here which were not produced in Kashmir but in adjacent areas.

publications²¹ have begun to organize the sources for a study of the medieval Buddhist culture of Baltistan and the Gilgit Agency.

The art from greater Kashmir indicates that Tantric religious practices existed there in the seventh and eighth centuries. However, all the Buddhist pilgrims who journeyed through this area identified groups associated with Hīnayāna or proto-Mahāyāna beliefs as the dominant religious force. These pilgrims also described forms of Buddhist practice that they considered heretical, such as mantra and dhāraṇīs which would later be associated with Vajrayāna²².

We know from literary sources that by the tenth century Kashmir was an important center of Vajrayāna Buddhism. These Kashmiri monasteries provided the scholars and artists who were instrumental in the Buddhist 'renaissance' in western Tibet (including Ladakh) in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The work of these artists can still be identified in the earliest art of the monasteries of Ladakh, Spiti, and Zangskar.

c) Central Asia

Buddhism was probably introduced into western Central Asia as early as the third century B.C. The most active periods for religious propagation and art production in this region were the first through fourth centuries A.D., during the period of Kuṣāṇa rule, and in the sixth through eighth centuries in the Turkic period. Although there was a steady decline in Buddhist activity after the advent of Islam, Buddhist revivals associated with the Mongol conquest can be identified as late as the thirteenth century²³.

The close historico-cultural ties, established in the Kushan period between the peoples of this vast empire, continued to develop in the subsequent eras. The Kushan contribution to the medieval art of Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan is particularly important [...] It is perfectly clear that the peoples of those countries are the heirs to Kushan culture. The Kushan era is part and parcel of their history²⁴.

Thus, Russian archaeologists have emphasized the importance of the continuity of the Kuṣāṇa artistic heritage rather than restricting their studies to arts associated with Kuṣāṇa patronage. Earlier scholars had attributed the majority of Buddhist artistic finds to the Kuṣāṇa period. However, recent excavations in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan have demonstrated the importance of the sixth through eighth centuries for the expansion of Buddhist art; '[...] it was precisely in the 7th and early 8th centuries that Buddhist artistic creativity reached its peak in Ṭukhāristān and all of Western Turkistan'²⁵. From the beginning of the seventh century, certain western Turkic rulers patronized Buddhism²⁶. East Asian pilgrims attest to their patronage of Buddhist sites from eastern Afghanistan to Kashmir²⁷.

²¹ e.g. Jettmar, 'Bolor - A Contribution to the Political and Ethnic Geography of Northern Pakistan,' pp. 411-447.

²² Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Book III, p. 148.

²³ B.A. Litvinsky, 'Outline History of Buddhism in Central Asia,' pp. 121-122, in *Kushan Studies in the U.S.S.R.*

²⁴ G. Gafurov, 'Kushan Civilization and World Culture,' p. 13.

²⁵ Litvinsky, 'Outline History,' p. 116.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁷ For example, W. Fuchs, 'Huei-ch'ao's Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien um 726,' pp. 444-446.

The spread of Buddhism in Central Asia beyond the urban centers can be traced to the impact of trade and the increased affluence that resulted from participation in international trade. The trade network was controlled by the Turks.

There is little information about the relationship between Buddhist institutions and the state in Central Asia. Scholars have noted the tendency of Buddhist institutions either to merge with the state, as occurred in Tibet, or to become an autonomous political unit, as occurred in China. Litvinsky suggests that one of these two possibilities occurred during the sixth through eighth centuries in western Tukhāristān²⁸. He further hypothesizes that conflicts resulting from this political activity caused Buddhism's subsequent loss of influence in the area.

Other sources for information about sectarian affiliations are limited. The Nikāya schools appear to have been dominant during this period; but Mahāyāna doctrines were also taught: in fact, we have evidence that Mahāyāna doctrines were taught in Central Asia at least from the second century A.D. However, as late as the seventh century Hsüan-tsang records that the Sarvāstivādin, who were a Hīnayāna sect, predominated throughout Central Asia²⁹. Fifty years later, I-ching reports a greater diversity of sectarian affiliation, the existence of Sarvāstivādin, and a few Mahāsāṃghika in western Central Asia³⁰. By the eighth century, we know that Buddhism had spread, to some extent, from the urban centers into the rural areas. Evidence for this comes from excavations at Adžina Tepe and Zang Tepe, as well as reports by the pilgrim Hui-ch'ao.

Adžina Tepe, in the Vaksh Valley, is the most important Buddhist monument of this period so far excavated in western Central Asia. It dates from the latter part of the seventh to eighth centuries³¹. Litvinsky reports evidence for the existence of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna ideas at Adžina Tepe³².

The art of Adžina Tepe seems to represent a period when Buddhist doctrine had not yet been systematized into generally accepted or clearly defined schools. Litvinsky concludes that local secular traditions strongly affected the Buddhist art at Adžina Tepe, and that Buddhism in western Tukhāristān had numerous local peculiarities³³. However, local influences in those areas did not overwhelm the religious idiom, as was the case in Sogdia³⁴.

Similarities in style between the painting and sculpture of Adžina Tepe and Fondukistān have been frequently noted³⁵. Repeated images of seated Buddha figures dominate the painted compositions at Adžina Tepe. Bodhisattva figures are present, but they do not appear to be the center of iconic configurations which serve as the focus of ritual worship. A colossal clay sculpture of the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa was found in the monastery. All of these iconographic themes are also found in the art of the same period in the Hindu Kush and at Tapa Sardār near Ghazni.

Recent analysis of the finds from Khotan has attempted to ascertain the doctrinal affiliations for the art discovered there. According to Chinese pilgrims, vari-

²⁸ Litvinsky, 'Outline History,' p. 100.

²⁹ Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, pp. 133-134.

³⁰ Litvinsky, 'Outline History', p. 65.

³¹ Ibid., p. 113.

³² Ibid., pp. 119-120.

³³ Ibid., pp. 116-117.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 117; for discussions of the sculptural style at Fondukistān, cf. Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 49-59; B. Rowland, *Ancient Art from Afghanistan: Treasures of the Kabul Museum*, pp. 116-118.

ous Buddhist groups coexisted in Khotan, the Mahāsāmghika and the Sarvāstivādin predominating. Soviet scholars have suggested that the Vaibhāṣika, a subsect of the Sarvāstivādin, had played an important role there in the transition to Mahāyāna³⁶. However, the iconography of the finds does not permit us to assign the art to either the Sarvāstivādin or the Mahāsāmghika. Most of the subjects of the art are representative of later doctrines. Williams attributes Khotanese painting to the eighth century³⁷. This date would not be inconsistent with the fact that many of the concepts found in Khotanese art, as well as literature, are also found in esoteric Buddhism. In Khotan, however, these ideas were not yet fully developed. Buddhist texts found at Khotan can be described as 'proto-Tantric'; '[...] in a minor way, Khotan represents a transitional stage in the evolution of the art of Vajrayāna'³⁸.

In Sogdia, despite extensive excavations, no Buddhist monuments dating to the eighth century have been found. Nonetheless, the monumental art of Pyandžikent and Varahša shows the influence of both the Hindu and Buddhist arts of India³⁹. The paintings of noblemen that have been found at these two sites can be compared to similar images, dating to the seventh century found at Bāmiyān. A large number of sculptures have been found in Sogdia. They are of unbaked, painted clay and this technique is also found at Fondukistān, Tepe Maranjān in Kabul, and Tapa Sardār in Ghazni.

Important evidence for a fully developed esoteric (Vajrayāna) iconography at this time comes not from the West but from Chinese Central Asia. The manuscripts and paintings discovered from Tun-huang by Stein included esoteric (Vajrayāna) iconographic themes datable to the eighth and ninth centuries, some of which can be associated with the period of Tibetan occupation at Tun-huang.

d) Indian Subcontinent

By the seventh and eighth centuries, iconography associated with esoteric Buddhist ideas and practices could be found in all the Buddhist centers of India. Often at these same sites was found evidence for Hindu worship. The most extensive remains of Tantric iconography have been found at numerous sites in the northeast, such as Nālandā and Ratnagiri. Other important sites are at Ellora, in the west, and Mysore, in the south⁴⁰, to name just a few.

Outside Central Asia and northwest India, the monuments of Bengal, Bihar, and Nepal provide the most important sources for the study of the evolution of early esoteric Buddhist art. While the literary sources and iconography are essentially the same throughout India, somewhat different artistic themes and styles emerged in the northeast as a result of separate cultural and historical traditions. A comparative analysis between the latter art and that of the northwest can be pursued only after we have devised a chronology for each of these two schools.

In this brief survey, we have seen that there was multisectarian religious practice during the seventh and eighth centuries in Central Asia, the contiguous mountain regions of northwest India and Pakistan, at many sites in India particularly the northeast and Nepal. In all the regions, it is difficult to identify specifically the

³⁶ Litvinsky, *Outline History*, p. 65.

³⁷ J. Williams, 'The Iconography of Khotanese Painting,' p. 109.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 116. See also p. 115 for a discussion of the usage of 'proto-Tantra.'

³⁹ Litvinsky, *Outline History*, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁰ R.S. Gupte, *The Iconography of the Buddhist Sculptures (Caves) of Ellora*, p. 28; D. Mitra, *Ratnagiri*.

religious content of the art with the ideology of the sects as known from literary references. For example, as we showed earlier, artistic themes found east of the Hindu Kush in Swat and Kashmir are indicative of an early stage of esoteric Buddhism. Yet, according to literature of the time, the Sarvāstivādin and Mahāsāṃghika dominated in these areas. Although these groups were considered Hīnayāna by their contemporaries, in retrospect many of their ideas can be seen as influential on the development of Mahāyāna⁴¹. These ideas could be seen also as important for Vajrayāna thought.

These same groups co-existed in Central Asia. Attempts to parallel Khotanese art with the religious doctrines of these groups have been unsatisfactory; rather, the art of Khotan could be considered proto-Tantric. In discussing this peculiar discrepancy between artistic remains and doctrine, Williams remarks, 'There is, of course, no reason to expect a total reflection of ideology in art. At most, each successive change of locus in the migration of religious forms seems to allow a certain break with artistic conventions towards a fuller representation of new ideas'⁴².

Buddhism in Eastern Afghanistan and the Hindu Kush

The sixth through eighth centuries saw extensive changes in the political situation as well as in Buddhist institutions and thought throughout eastern Afghanistan.

Wu K'ung⁴³, who visited India in the eighth century, tells us that in the seventh century Turkic rulers and the aristocracy had become Buddhists, and that they founded and supported Buddhist monasteries. This conversion was motivated by political considerations and was associated with their transition to a settled, more urban way of life⁴⁴. The impact of their patronage on Buddhist centers from Afghanistan to Kashmir is attested to by textual evidence.

There was an increased production of Buddhist monastic art from the Hindu Kush to Ghazni in the sixth to eighth centuries⁴⁵. However, as we have discussed earlier, this monastic art does not precisely reflect the doctrines found in the Mahāsāṃghika and Sarvāstivādin literature which was composed many centuries earlier. This gap between the professed sectarian affiliation and the art may be explained by the fact that while canonical texts containing the formal tenets of each tradition continued in use for centuries, the actual interpretations and rituals associated with them changed. We have already discussed the example of Khotan. Parallel evidence from the art of other sites allows us to conclude that, from the sixth to eighth centuries, other ideas and practices also must have become important at monastic centers in Afghanistan. A clue to the nature of the change is found in the reports of Buddhist pilgrims visiting Central Asia and India. From the fifth to the eighth centuries, they increasingly tell of the existence of Mahāyāna groups. Also, the literature of the time testifies to a growing interest in Tantra (esoteric Buddhism). This movement should be seen within the context of the growing importance of Hinduism. Both archaeological and literary evidence tells us that often the same individuals patronized Buddhist and Hindu religious cults. Thus, interaction

⁴¹ Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, pp. 303-305.

⁴² Williams, 'The Iconography of Khotanese Painting,' p. 116.

⁴³ S. Lévi and E. Chavannes, 'L'Itinéraire d'Ou K'ong (751-790),' p. 357.

⁴⁴ Fuchs, 'Huei-Ch'ao's Pilgerreise,' p. 445; A. von Gabain, 'Der Buddhismus in Zentralasien,' p. 506 ff.

⁴⁵ Taddei and Verardi, 'Tapa Sardār - Second Preliminary Report,' pp. 131-135.

in art and thought was a natural by-product of heterogeneous religious practices. One result was the development of syncretic religious iconography, as can be seen at Tapa Sardār, Ghazni.

By the seventh and eighth centuries, Mahāyāna beliefs, which had been taught for several centuries in Central Asia, began to dominate in eastern Afghanistan. The material evidence for increased activity at Buddhist centers is so marked that Fussman has called for a reevaluation of the importance formerly accorded to Buddhism in Afghanistan during the earlier period of the great Kuṣāṇas⁴⁶. While professed Mahāsāṃghika and Sarvāstivādin groups were also important in the Hindu Kush (as well as areas to the North and East and in Kashmir), we must again be sensitive to the gap between formal doctrine and practice. Although there are numerous distinctions between the groups, they shared some common doctrines. 'In India, Sarvastivādins, Mahāsāṃghikas [both of the Hīnayāna tradition], and Mahāyānists remained in contact, living and teaching in the same monasteries. All sorts of borrowing would thus be possible [...]'⁴⁷. Thus, when the Mahāsāṃghika are reported at two sites within the Hindu Kush — Bāmiyān and Andarab — we must examine this professed sectarian affiliation of the monasteries within a broader contemporary context. Bareau believes that even among those groups which continued to describe themselves as Hīnayānists, the beliefs and interpretations of their texts had actually become Mahāyāna⁴⁸. Further evidence for the growth of Mahāyāna in Afghanistan is provided by a comparison of reports by Hsüan-tsang with those of later travellers. In the early seventh century, Hsüan-tsang reports that Mahāyāna had a strong following in the areas adjacent to the Hindu Kush — Kapiśa to the East, Ghazni and the upper Helmand River Valley to the South. Comparing this with reports from Hui-ch'ao, we conclude that the increased importance of the Mahāyāna in Afghanistan between 632 and 727 indicates a dynamic religious situation paralleling the changes in Buddhist institutions and doctrines in northern India and Central Asia.

Although Buddhism was the dominant religion in Afghanistan, Hinduism, Manicheism, Christianity, and Judaism also had adherents⁴⁹. From the sixth century on, Hinduism became increasingly important in eastern Afghanistan, and eventually became the dominant religion in the Kabul area in the ninth century at which time Islam began its rise to prominence. Earlier it was argued that the demise of Buddhism in Afghanistan occurred in the fifth century as a result of the violent destruction of monasteries and settlements by Hephthalite armies. The abandonment of monasteries in sites in the Logar Valley and Kabul Valley — Tepe Maranjān, Tepe Khazana, and Guldara monastery (dating from the fifth and sixth centuries) — has been used as evidence for this view. However, there is no sign of violent destruction. A more probable explanation is the decreased importance of these monasteries. It is possible that the increased importance of Hinduism under Śāhi patronage from the seventh century on was partially responsible for the abandonment of these monasteries⁵⁰. Also, from the eighth century, the conversion to Islam began, which eventually transformed the religious culture of all Afghanistan. Thus, the demise of Buddhism in Afghanistan, rather than occurring during the Hephthalite period, was a gradual and much later event,

⁴⁶ G. Fussman and M. Le Berre, *Monuments bouddhiques de la région de Caboul*, pp. 55-56.

⁴⁷ E.J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 200.

⁴⁸ Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ R. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, pp. 43-44; Litvinsky, *Outline History*, pp. 71-73.

⁵⁰ Fussman and Le Berre, *Monuments bouddhiques*, pp. 58-59.

which occurred as a result of political and economic changes that involved both Hindu and Islamic rulers⁵¹.

Archaeological evidence does little to assist us in determining which Buddhist groups inhabited specific centers in Afghanistan. In a major reevaluation of Buddhist sites in the Kabul region, Fussman⁵² could only conclude that for certain periods of Buddhist art it is difficult to decide whether the art resulted from a Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna ideology, much less to which group the patron belonged. So far, any hypothesis that Sarvāstivādin or Mahāsāṃghika predominated in eastern Afghanistan has been based either on very few inscriptions or the testimony of Chinese pilgrims⁵³. It remains necessary to corroborate this testimony from the art historical and archaeological evidence.

Inscriptional and art historical evidence has been excavated at Haḍḍa. Potsherds with ink inscriptions identifying a Sarvāstivādin community, have been found dating probably from the fifth century and later⁵⁴. Yet, Tarzi has also found evidence⁵⁵ for Tantric practices there: a yantra inscribed on a monastery floor at Tepe Shotor, one of the largest mounds at Haḍḍa. In addition, Tantric practices are suggested by the subject matter of paintings found in an underground chamber at Tepe Shotor⁵⁶.

Only recently have art historical studies addressed the problem of relating the visual arts to local practices or sectarian doctrines. The publications of the archaeological finds from Tapa Sardār at Ghazni unequivocally demonstrate a form of religious syncretism. Hindu deities have been found incorporated into a Buddhist shrine. The image of Durgā-Mahiśāsūramardīnī was found in Chapel 23, together with the standing figure of a jewelled Buddha of the Fondukistān type; both images were apparently later additions to the original chapel⁵⁷. The excavators have not yet attempted to explain the nature of Buddhist practice at this site, but certainly the decipherment of the unusual iconographic ensemble in Chapel 23⁵⁸ would be a major contribution to our understanding of the last phase (in the eighth and ninth centuries) of Buddhism in Afghanistan. The typology of the jewelled Buddha image is discussed in detail in chapter VII.

Several studies have demonstrated the presence of Jaina and Hindu sects in the Kapiśa-Kabul area. However, the nature and process of interaction between the groups adhering to Jaina, Hindu, or Buddhist practices is unknown. The stylistic similarities between icons used for both Buddhist and Hindu rituals at least suggest a common artistic culture⁵⁹.

To date, we have been able to ascertain that the style, technique, and iconography of the Buddhist monastic art from Adžina Tepe in Soviet Central Asia to Ghazni in Afghanistan have similar features. In these monasteries during the seventh century, Mahāsāṃghika and Sarvāstivādin predominated. In the eighth century some local communities were identified as Mahāyāna; evidence exists for some syncretic

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 57-59.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 41-59.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 96, fn. 1.

⁵⁴ Fussman, 'Une Inscription Kharosthī à Hadda,' pp. 5-9.

⁵⁵ Z. Tarzi, 'Hadda à la lumière des trois dernières campagnes de fouilles de Tapa-é-Shotor (1974-1976),' pp. 404-410.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Taddei, 'Tapa Sardār - First Preliminary Report,' pp. 109-124; Idem, 'The Mahisamardini Image from Tapa Sardar, Ghazni, Afghanistan,' pp. 203-213.

⁵⁸ Taddei and Verardi, 'Tapa Sardār - Second Preliminary Report,' pp. 47-82.

⁵⁹ Sh. Kuwayama, 'The Turki Śāhis and Relevant Brahmanical Sculptures in Afghanistan,' pp. 375-407.

practices incorporating Hindu deities. Internal evidence for the performance of some Tantric Buddhist ritual is limited to Haḍḍa, but also may be inferred in the Hindu Kush and Ghazni, as shall be discussed. The continuation of traditional Buddhist iconographic forms, the repetitive nature of the imagery, and the lack of any complete iconographic configuration within its original architectural setting have so far prevented us from distinguishing the evolution of Mahāyāna art.

Literary Evidence for Buddhism in the Hindu Kush

Until now there has been no consistent interpretation of the iconography of the art of the Hindu Kush. A review of the contemporaneous Buddhist literature relevant to the most important period of artistic production in the Hindu Kush, the seventh and eighth centuries, provides the keys for the interpretation of the visual evidence.

Our goal is to understand the religious climate in Bāmiyān during the sixth to eighth centuries. Thus, in the first part of this section, I shall examine the textual evidence for contemporaneous religious ideas. I shall also discuss evidence found at other Buddhist centers which, by analogy, allows us further insights into doctrinal concerns at Bāmiyān. In the second part of this section, I shall analyse two texts associated with Mahāsāṃghika doctrine (one directly, one indirectly), and one that represents a significant trend in Buddhist thought during the sixth to eighth centuries. This evidence, combined with an analysis of the arts, allows me to propose in Part II that ideas underlying the iconography of Bāmiyān are also found in Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika literature, thus bringing us closer to the verification of a similar thesis earlier suggested by Bareau in his monumental study of Hīnayāna Buddhism.

The first indisputable literary reference to the religious ideas prevalent at Bāmiyān is provided for us by the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang in ca. A.D. 632. He tells us that the kingdom of Bāmiyān contained 'ten convents and about one thousand priests. They belong to the Little Vehicle, and the school of Lokottaravādins'⁶⁰, who where a subsect of the Mahāsāṃghika. About one hundred years later, Hui-ch'ao reports that the king and people were devoted to Buddhism and belonged to groups associated with either the Greater or Lesser Vehicle⁶¹.

The manuscript fragments of a library recovered from Bāmiyān by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan and studied by Sylvain Lévi suggest the same sectarian preferences as those reported by the Buddhist pilgrims, particularly the preference for the Mahāsāṃghika. The majority of the manuscripts relate to the Mahāsāṃghika and are fragments of a treatise of their Abhidharma, one of the three major classifications of Buddhist literature. Other fragments of Mahāsāṃghika literature include their Vinaya and a part of the Āgama, dating to the sixth or seventh century. A section of a Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma in a late Gupta script from about the eighth century, was also found⁶². Thus, the texts found at Bāmiyān belong to both the Mahāsāṃghika and the Sarvāstivādin schools; and, although the texts can be dated from the third to the eighth centuries, the majority are from

⁶⁰ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Book I, p. 50.

⁶¹ Fuchs, 'Huei-Ch'ao's Pilgerreise,' p. 449.

⁶² S. Lévi, 'Note sur des manuscrits sanscrits provenant de Bāmiyān (Afghanistan), et de Gilgit (Cachemire),' pp. 2-8.

later editions dating from the sixth to the eighth centuries. This collection was obviously interred in the stūpas not earlier than the eighth century A.D.

These dates and sectarian identifications become particularly important when coupled with the fact that the manuscripts were written in scripts and languages from India, Khotan, and Kucha. These Central Asian religious centers were connected to Bāmiyān by trade routes. Thus, although the evidence is fragmentary, we can discern a parallel between the cultural and religious milieu of Bāmiyān, as found in its art and literature, and the intellectual climate in the major Central Asian Buddhist centers in the sixth through eighth centuries.

The evidence from the other sites in the Hindu Kush is too fragmentary to allow an independent analysis of religious practices there. However, the uniformity of style and iconography in the art of all the Buddhist sites of the Hindu Kush suggests that these sites were related by patronage and doctrinal orientation to the religious center at Bāmiyān.

The Mahāsāṃghika and the Lokottaravādin

In his monumental study of Hīnayāna Buddhism, Bareau mentioned two crucial factors for an understanding of the art of Bāmiyān. Surprisingly, scholars have yet to comment upon his observations. Bareau was led to his first hypothesis by a reading of Hsüan-tsang's account of religious practices at Bāmiyān. Bareau speculated that the colossal Buddhas were an expression of Lokottaravādin doctrine. He also identified the connection between that doctrine and esoteric Buddhism. Thus, it has been concluded that 'Buddhist esoterism seems to have sprung up from the Lokottaravāda docetism [...] But it took centuries to emerge out as a system'⁶³.

Bareau has discussed the surviving historical data on the Lokottaravādins and concludes that they are difficult to distinguish from the Ekavyavahārika⁶⁴. The latter either continued to identify themselves only as Mahāsāṃghika or were absorbed into the Mahāyāna. In any case, the Lokottaravādin appear to have been the principal group of the Ekavyavahārika that conserved the name Mahāsāṃghika⁶⁵.

Bareau discussed the numerous concepts attributed to the closely related subsects of the Mahāsāṃghika. He lists the doctrines peculiar to the Lokottaravādin and concludes that, from the point of view of ontology and conceptions of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva, these concepts are very close to the fundamentals of Mahāyāna. He believes that the conception of the transcendent Buddha, the doctrine of docetism, and the emphasis on the career of the Bodhisattva originated with the Lokottaravādins. In addition, he notes that the doctrine of the transcendence of the Buddha is the basis for the doctrine of the trikāya (three bodies) of the Buddha, a concept basic to Mahāyāna thought⁶⁶.

Thus, Bareau⁶⁷, like Lévi, believes that the Mahāsāṃghika is a principal source of Mahāyāna thought. His belief is based both on the historical continuity of their doctrines and the fact that the locales of the institutions in which Mahāyānists practised were earlier inhabited by Mahāsāṃghika. Thus, Bareau proposes that the Mahāsāṃghika gradually became identified as Mahāyānists⁶⁸.

⁶³ Joshi, *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture*, p. 344, fn. 175.

⁶⁴ Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 75, 304.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 304-305.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Lokottaravādin last resided during the Pāla period, in the ninth to tenth centuries, in the monasteries of northeast India⁶⁹. It was here, during this period, that early esoteric Buddhist literature and art flourished. Similarly, the latest report we have of the Mahāsāmghika in India — that of Tāranātha — places the sect at Vikramaśīla Monastery in the twelfth century⁷⁰. It is this monastery that Tibetan tradition cites as playing a critical role in the teaching and promulgation of Vajrayāna Buddhism in the Himalayas. The great Buddhist scholar Atiśa, who taught in Tibet in the mid-eleventh century, was born in the western Himalayas in Mandi. He took his formal vows in a Mahāsāmghika community in Bodhgayā and later became an elder at Vikramaśīla before undertaking his travels to Gu-ge and central Tibet.

Another aspect of Mahāsāmghika doctrine which relates it to later Mahāyāna thought was a more liberal attitude toward the role of laymen in religious practice. In contrast to Hīnayānist thought, the Mahāsāmghika supported such concepts as lay Bodhisattvas and a separate organization for these laymen, similar to that which existed for the Saṅgha (clergy)⁷¹. This active encouragement of lay participation naturally would have increased the patronage of religious shrines and institutions. Since the layman was not discriminated against in his quest for salvation, a ruler could actively participate in religious affairs without losing his political status. On the contrary, as a lay Bodhisattva, his status would be enhanced.

Unfortunately, there are certain difficulties in relating the visual evidence at Bāmiyān to what we know of Mahāsāmghika doctrine, even if we assume that the Lokottaravādin ideas were also shared by the other Mahāsāmghika.

The art found at other Mahāsāmghika sites does not permit us to define specific artistic traditions which would have resulted from Mahāsāmghika beliefs and practices. According to inscriptions, the Mahāsāmghika were active in the first through fourth centuries at Nāgārjunakonda, Amarāvati, Kārlī, later at Ajanṭā⁷² and from an early date at Pāṭaliputra. In Afghanistan, we have an early Kuṣāṇa inscription relating to the Mahāsāmghika from an unknown stūpa in the Wardak Valley near Kabul. However, it is difficult to identify any consistent iconographic pattern in the art of these sites. Rather, it seems that the art of each of these sites owes more to contemporary regional trends than to sectarian traditions. Further, the art of each of these sites was created during different periods in the development of Buddhist art, with Bāmiyān being the latest. Thus, the earlier art that can be associated with Mahāsāmghika patronage responds to earlier interpretations of the doctrine and uses earlier visual forms. Likewise, the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush is best understood as resulting from regional artistic and religious traditions, as well as from the canonical literature.

This difficulty in identifying specifically a Mahāsāmghika iconography is not

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁰ Tāranātha lists 4 Acarya in Vikramaśīla who were Mahāsāmghika, including the Mantra-acarya. Thus it appears that '[...] the Hīnayāna vinaya of the Mahāsāmghika continues to be the disciplinary code of Buddhist monks who follow the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna trends' (G. Roth, ed., *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya*, p. XVI). Thus, we can understand that even in the seventh-eighth centuries Hindu Kush monasteries it is not unreasonable to imagine that the Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāmghika vinaya was followed, but at the same time Mahāyāna and perhaps also Vajrayāna philosophical tenets were explored.

Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India*, pp. 226, 235-6, 253-4. Also see Roth, *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya*, pp. XV-XVII.

⁷¹ A. Wayman and H. Wayman, *The Lion's Roar*, p. 8.

⁷² Weiner, *Ajanṭā*, pp. 33-34; Roth, *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya*, p. X.

unusual. The paucity of historical information prohibits an exact chronology for Mahāyāna, including early Vajrayāna art and literature. The art of the Hindu Kush assists us in understanding a phase in the evolution of Mahāyāna art in India and Central Asia which has previously been obscure. For here we can identify for the first time in historical northwest India a new stage in the development of medieval Buddhist art. Narrative images have been excluded, replaced by other iconographic themes such as images of differentiated Buddha types. A group of five Buddhas can be recognised. Bodhisattva images are also present, although they do not yet seem to serve as the focus of worship. The role of the Bodhisattva is impossible to determine from the fragmentary evidence available, but its compositional function is consistent. The same compositional schemes are used throughout. Some variant configurations can be considered proto-maṇḍalas. There is an internal consistency to all the art of the Hindu Kush in style, composition, and iconography.

Relating the art to the actual rituals practised at Bāmiyān is also very difficult. Although, as we shall see in Part II, the organization of the total visual configuration within each architectural unit can be suggested, there is unfortunately an absence of cult images except the two remaining colossi. Perhaps architectural analysis will yield some evidence for the earlier religious practices in the Bāmiyān Valley. But, as of this writing, no serious attempt has yet been made to coordinate archaeological information concerning places of worship with textual sources on the organization and function of the Saṅgha. Such an investigation might throw light on the question of hierarchy in the clergy and their various roles. Because no comprehensive comparative analysis has yet been conducted on Indian medieval Buddhist monastic architecture and its functions, it is impossible to postulate the meaning of the unusual architectural features at Bāmiyān. For example, it is possible that some of these features, such as the many small chapels and the extreme scarcity of assembly halls, result not from considerations of ritual or monastic organization, but rather from the economic reality of Bāmiyān's relationship to the pilgrimage and mercantile traffic. The architecture of Bāmiyān will be discussed further in Part II, and chapter VIII.

So that we might further understand the religious and intellectual climate of Bāmiyān during this period, I shall now examine three texts: the *Mahāvastu*, the Vinaya of the Lokottaravādin; the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*, perhaps attributable to the Mahāsāṃghika which relates to pertinent sections of the *Mahāvastu*; and a Mahāyāna text, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, which represents the early Tantric ideas evolving during the period. Because of the difficulty in linking a set of doctrines exclusively to one subsect, I think it valid to consider each of these texts as representative of a philosophical trend of both the group associated with it and the period in which the text was written and used. Thus, although we cannot be certain that any of these texts, except for the *Mahāvastu*, were important in the religious life of Bāmiyān, I believe that their ideas allow us to understand the ideological background of the period against which the distinctive art forms of the Hindu Kush evolved.

The *Mahāvastu*

Since literary evidence indicates that Bāmiyān was the main center of the Lokottaravādin, an understanding of their ideas will assist us in our study of the function of Bāmiyān and the meaning and use of its art. A canonical text of the Lokottaravādin, the *Mahāvastu*, has fortunately survived. However, the doctrines of the Lokottaravādin only explain the premises of their formal beliefs — their ritual practices are more difficult to ascertain, as shall be discussed.

The *Mahāvastu*, written in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, belongs to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of Lokottaravādin. It is generally agreed that the *Mahāvastu* is the result of several compilers working over a long period of time somewhere between the first to fourth centuries A.D. As a result, the text contains considerable repetitions and contradictions, the legacy of the diverse traditions which were incorporated into the text. The central theme is the miraculous life of Śākyamuni. The description of the supramundane character of the Buddha which is usually associated with the *Mahāvastu* is particularly consistent in the 'first few hundred pages of the text and is often contradicted by passages derived from more ancient sources'⁷³. The analysis in this study pertains to this later section, which is still three to four hundred years earlier than the art of the Hindu Kush. It thus is important to bear in mind that this part of the *Mahāvastu* represents a particular period in the history of Buddhism, ca. fourth century A.D., and the direction of development of the principal tenets of the Lokottaravādin. By the seventh century certain ideas, such as the Ten Bhūmis, would have been interpreted within the context of contemporaneous thought.

The text's prologue outlines the important moments in the life of Śākyamuni who is idealized as a symbol of the transcendent Dharma. The text also describes the four kinds of conduct or careers (*caryā*) for a Bodhisattva. Following this section is an account of the Ten Bhūmis, which is then followed by a chapter on the history of the Dīpaṅkara Buddha⁷⁴. According to one theory the *Mahāvastu* had originally begun with the chapter on Dīpaṅkara Buddha.

The initial statement of the prologue is: 'Om! Homage to the glorious, mighty Buddha, and to all Buddhas, past, future, and present. Here begins the *Mahāvastu*. There are four stages in the careers of Bodhisattvas'⁷⁵. The four 'careers' as explained in the *Mahāvastu*, are the (1) *prakṛti-caryā*, (2) *praṇidhāna-caryā*, (3) *anuloma-caryā*, and (4) *anivarta-caryā*. The ten stages of spiritual progress (the Ten Bhūmis) can be divided according to the *Mahāvastu*, into the four 'careers' (*caryā*) in the following manner: (1) the first half of the first Bhūmi; (2) the second half of the first Bhūmi; (3) the second to seventh Bhūmis; and (4) the eighth to tenth Bhūmis⁷⁶. The prologue then establishes the manner in which the Tathāgata Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, achieved the four stages of enlightenment.

Following the Ten Bhūmis is the story of Dīpaṅkara Buddha, including the prediction of the Dīpaṅkara Buddha that sets in motion the events leading to the eventual enlightenment of Śākyamuni. The prediction occurs following the future Śākyamuni Buddha's meeting with the Dīpaṅkara Buddha who first proclaimed of the Exalted One, 'Thou wilt become, O young man, in some future time, after immeasurable, incalculable, infinite *kalpas*, a Tathāgata, an Arhan, a perfect Buddha called Śākyamuni'⁷⁷. Then subsequent stories follow the terrestrial life of the Buddha Śākyamuni. Scattered throughout the text are diverse *Jātakas* and *Avadānas* and *Sūtras* (former existences, stories of disciples and devotees, and discourses). The stories describe the cycles of rebirth that are the result of the working out of karma through successive lifetimes — a basic notion of Indian

⁷³ Bhikku T. Rahula, *A Critical Study of the Mahāvastu*, p. 74. For an analysis of the Ten Bhūmis see pp. 62-69.

⁷⁴ In these citations *Mahāvastu* refers to the Sanskrit text edited by Senart and *The Mahāvastu* to the English translation by Jones. *Mahāvastu*, p. 193.

⁷⁵ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I: 7.

⁷⁶ Rahula, *Critical Study*, p. 62.

⁷⁷ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I: 1; for the story of the meeting with Dīpaṅkara, I: 188-198.

To find release from this chain of rebirths is the goal of Buddhism philosophy.

The Bodhisattva's career is discussed in great detail through an exposition of the Ten Bhūmis. The culmination is reached in the tenth Bhūmi — the abhiṣeka in the Tuṣita Heaven — from which the Bodhisattva enters into his last existence. According to the *Mahāvastu*, this last important phase begins not with Śākyamuni's birth from Queen Māyā, but rather with the Bodhisattva's rebirth from the Tuṣita Heaven. 'Yearning for the due time [Samaya], he passed into the world of the Tuṣita devas. There the Sugata destroyed liability to existence by reflecting on its impermanence, and thus entered on what was to be his last existence'⁷⁸. The career of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni ends with his release from existence and from future rebirth, his Mahāparinirvāṇa. The first continuous narration depicting the last of the innumerable rebirths of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni, which begins with his residence in the Tuṣita Heaven, is found in the *Lalitavistara*.

The importance of the discourse on the Bhūmis and the lessons it contains is emphasized in the *Mahāvastu*. 'The doctrine of the Ten Bhūmis must be taught by those who aspire after enlightenment, and presented to those who trust in the right-thinking Bodhisattva'⁷⁹. This theoretical treatment of the stages in the Bodhisattva's development toward Buddhahood is a concept characteristic of Mahāyāna philosophy. Although the Lokottaravādin did not see themselves as part of the Mahāyāna, their canonical text, the *Mahāvastu*, can be viewed as proto-Mahāyāna in this respect as in others⁸⁰.

This connection between the *Mahāvastu* and Mahāyāna thought can be seen by an examination of the description of the Bodhisattva's career in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (of the *Avataṃsaka* literary corpus), a more complete Mahāyāna statement of the Bodhisattva doctrine⁸¹. In the sixth century, Paramārtha listed the *Avataṃsaka* as belonging to the Mahāsāṃghika canon. This treatise describes the Bodhisattva's career in stages parallel to those described in the *Mahāvastu*. Indeed, despite numerous differences in the two texts, Rahder has established that the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* and the *Mahāvastu* both have a quite similar schematic arrangement of the Bhūmis⁸². To cite one of these examples, he notes that the section on the third Bhūmi in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* is a summary of the parallel section in the *Mahāvastu*⁸³. The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* is generally more complete and articulate. Our goal is to understand the notion of the Ten Bhūmis as taught in Bāmiyān in the seventh and eighth centuries. The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* presents the stages of spiritual progress as they were probably understood at the time. The last Bhūmi in both texts is titled abhiṣeka and the concepts are essentially the same. The *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, however, gives a fuller description of Śākyamuni as he appears during the abhiṣeka. By way of explaining the peculiar brevity of the last three Bhūmis Senart suggests that an earlier version of the *Mahāvastu* had seven Bhūmis and this was amended to embrace the later theory of the 'Ten' Bhūmis. By the time of the Hindu Kush paintings, however, the fully developed notion of these last three Bhūmis as known in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* must have been current⁸⁴.

⁷⁸ Ibid., vol. I: 4. This is the view point of all sources, e.g. Nidānakathā (see J. Dutoit, *Jātakām*) except the *Buddhacārīta*.

⁷⁹ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I: 151.

⁸⁰ Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 76-78.

⁸¹ *Daśabhūmikasūtra et Bodhisattvabhūmi: Chapitres Vihāra et Bhūmi*, ed. by J. Rahder.

⁸² Ibid., pp. III-VII.

⁸³ Ibid., p. IV; for another view see Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine*, p. 271 ff.

⁸⁴ Rahder, op. cit., pp. 82-95, and *Mahāvastu*, p. XXXV, fn. 1.

In the outline of the Ten Bhūmis below, the description of Bhūmis one through nine is quoted from the *Mahāvastu*; the tenth is quoted from the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*.

1. Durārohā - 'hard to reach.'
2. Baddhamānā - 'bound.'
3. Puṣpamaṇḍitā - 'adorned with flowers.'
4. Rucirā - 'beautiful.'
5. Citravistarā - 'of varied expanse.'
6. Rūpavatī - 'of fair form.'
7. Durjayā - 'hard to conquer'; 'They [the Bodhisattvas] renounce their kingdoms or whatever sovereignty is theirs. They go forth from home into the homeless state, and consequently preach the dharma of abstention from murder'⁸⁵.

The three stages [of the Ten Bhūmis] are arranged according to the stages of the life of a prince who becomes a universal monarch — his birth, appointment as viceroy, and consecration. Throughout these, there is no turning back⁸⁶.

8. Janmanideśa - 'discussion of birth'; 'In this stage, Bodhisattvas are looked upon as Buddhas. They are eloquent and great teachers'⁸⁷.
9. Yauvarājya - 'vicereyship' (appointing a crown prince)⁸⁷.
10. Abhiṣeka - 'consecration as king'; 'A vast lotus appears and the Bodhisattva sits on it in the concentration called the knowledge of the omniscient. Other lotuses appear, on which other Bodhisattvas from the ten quarters sit and gaze at him. An earthquake shakes all the universes and rays of light issue, appeasing the pains of all the creatures. Rays issue from the foreheads of the assembled Buddhas and rest on his [the Bodhisattva's] head. He is thus consecrated (*abhiṣikta*, literally 'sprinkled') and called a fully enlightened Buddha, just as a universal monarch takes his eldest son and 'sprinkles' him as a viceroy with water from the four oceans. The Bodhisattva through his skill in remembering is able to take up and keep in mind all the clouds of dharmas showered on him by the Buddhas in his presence, but he still has to be reborn once. Then, when he descends from the Tuṣita Heaven to this world, he is ready to undertake all the prescribed actions of a Buddha in saving creatures'⁸⁸.

According to the *Mahāvastu* 'The Bodhisattvas are born in the Tuṣita Heaven, and then have a desire for a human existence. Although they are spoken of in the plural, the individual described is always Śākyamuni'⁸⁹. The long explanation of Śākyamuni's conception and birth emphasizes the transcendental nature of the Buddha. 'The conduct of the Exalted One is transcendental; his root of virtue is transcendental [...] The Buddhas conform to the world's conditions, but in such a way that they also conform to the traits of transcendentalism'⁹⁰.

In the passages just quoted, we can see the connection between the *Mahāvastu* and later Mahāyāna thought. The prologue to the *Mahāvastu* discusses the career of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni beginning with the prediction of Dīpaṅkara Buddha and emphasizing Śākyamuni's residence in the Tuṣita Heaven. As we shall see, the art of the main Buddhist center in the Bāmiyān Valley reflects this conception of the spiritual career of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni.

The passages from the latest section of the *Mahāvastu* that we have discussed above were written ca. the fourth century A.D. The majority of the art of Bāmiyān

⁸⁵ This synopsis is taken from Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 202; for the seventh Bhūmi, *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I: 101; for the first seven Bhūmis in the Sanskrit text see *Mahāvastu*, pp. 78.11-141.16.

⁸⁶ Thomas, op. cit., p. 202; *The Mahāvastu*, I: 101-2.

⁸⁷ Thomas, op. cit., pp. 202-3, also the eighth and ninth Bhūmi, *Mahāvastu*, pp. 136.8-141.16.

⁸⁸ Thomas, op. cit., pp. 209-10. In the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the ninth Bhūmi is entitled 'Bodhisattva' and the tenth 'Buddha.' *Mahāvastu*, the Tenth Bhūmi, pp. 141.1-141.9.

⁸⁹ Thomas, op. cit., p. 203.

⁹⁰ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I: 132.

was created in the seventh and eighth centuries. Thus, the art of the Hindu Kush represents a later period in the history of Buddhism than the *Mahāvastu* and was probably also based on later traditions, commentaries, or texts. In attempting to understand the relationship between art and literature, it is not possible to think in terms of a one to one correlation as one finds several centuries later, when works of art are a faithful rendition of a particular textual description. Rather, our limited resources necessitate that one must think in terms of an historical phase of development in Buddhist thought when parallel sets of ideas can be identified in literature and art. Thus, the *Mahāvastu*, and particularly the first and latest part, can be considered to represent themes parallel to those represented in the art of Bāmiyān. It is probable, however, that other texts also contained these ideas, and these texts might also have served as an inspiration for the art. In any case, there would have been a number of texts representative of the intellectual and spiritual climate of the period.

The *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*

It is also useful to consider an apparently Mahāsāṃghika text, the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*, which incorporated many of the ideas found earlier in the *Mahāvastu*. Some of these same ideas are also found in the art of the Hindu Kush. According to a recent analysis, the text reflects the last stage of the Mahāsāṃghika before it was absorbed into the Mahāyāna schools.

Paramārtha, writing in the mid-sixth century, includes the following sūtras in the Mahāsāṃghika canon: the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Avatamsaka*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, the *Vimalakīrti*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and the *Śrī-mālā*⁹¹. That is not to say of course that these were Mahāsāṃghika texts. Their inclusion in the Mahāsāṃghika canon at this late date does, however, allow us to understand late Mahāsāṃghika ideas during the period when Bāmiyān was created. All studies on Mahāyāna Buddhism include discussion of some or all of these texts.

One of them, the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*, has been attributed to the Mahāsāṃghika in about the third century A.D. in the Andhra area, southeast India⁹². Wayman demonstrates that an evolution of Mahāsāṃghika thought can be traced between the *Mahāvastu* and the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*, the latter being 'a Mahāyāna outgrowth of the later Mahāsāṃghika'⁹³.

Wayman's attribution of the text to the Mahāsāṃghika is based on the similarity between several specific concepts in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*. It is significant that most of the ideas that appear in both the *Śrī-mālā* and the *Mahāvastu* are also found in the art of the Hindu Kush. The same set of Bodhisattva career phases are found in the introduction to both texts⁹⁴. In addition, the emphasis on the three last Bhūmis is quite similar⁹⁵. In both, the Bodhisattva is referred to as Buddha in the eighth Bhūmi. Although he is again referred to as a Bodhisattva in the subsequent Bhūmis, it is nonetheless clear that he 'cannot be "far away" from the supreme enlightenment accompanied by the Buddha nature'⁹⁶. The same view toward the transmundane nature of the Buddha Śākyamuni during his last earthly sojourn is expressed through the idea of 'body

⁹¹ Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques*, p. 296.

⁹² Wayman and Wayman, *The Lion's Roar*, p. 3.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 26.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 33-35.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

made of mind,' *manomaya*. Another important theme, that also may underlie the intimate association between the ruling and religious institutions in Bāmiyān, is that of the lay Bodhisattva. The *Śrī-mālā-sūtra* is particularly eloquent in portraying 'the Bodhisattva path in a way that applies equally to layman or monk'⁹⁷.

Certainly the texts that we have discussed in this chapter are not the only ones to contain ideas relevant to the art of the Hindu Kush. I only hope to draw attention to the existence of texts that may have been familiar to the Buddhists living in eastern Afghanistan and that express a viewpoint similar to that which underlay the art produced at this time in the Hindu Kush. These texts also represent certain developments in Buddhist thought which later became associated with esoteric Buddhism. Wayman demonstrates throughout his study the importance of the *Śrī-mālā* for esoteric Buddhism in China and Japan.

The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (MMK)

Like the *Mahāvastu*, the *MMK*, as it survives today, is the result of several authors over a period of time. It is a significant text in that it represents a later phase between the *Sūtra* and the *Tantra*. Although we do not know if the *MMK* was actually studied and adhered to in Bāmiyān, we do know it is indicative of a phase of proto-Tantric Buddhist thought contemporary with the art of the Hindu Kush. The original text has been given dates as wide ranging as the second and eighth centuries⁹⁸. On the basis of textual analysis, a fifth-century date has been proposed⁹⁹ by Snellgrove.

The text is principally concerned with Śākyamuni, representing him as a transcendent Lord. Royal symbolism is used throughout the text, as it is in the *Mahāvastu*. Due to the transitional nature of the text, the sources of new themes are particularly explicit — in this case, Indian secular and Brahmanic traditions. A relevant example is the frequent reference to kingship. Particularly interesting is the process of identifying, assimilating, and reordering new themes¹⁰⁰.

This process of integration and hierarchical subordination of foreign and secular themes into a Buddhist perspective was accomplished through the concept of the *kula*, which was symbolized in visual diagrams. One example is the proto-maṇḍala described in the *MMK*, which will be discussed further in the chapter dealing with iconographic themes (Fig. 29). Although the Hindu Kush proto-maṇḍalas have a more integrated iconography and are simpler than the *MMK* proto-maṇḍalas, both lack consistent and clearly defined imagery. Therefore, the discussion found in the *MMK* of the concepts associated with these proto-maṇḍalas may be illustrative of similar concepts current in the Hindu Kush. As yet, we do not have enough information about the historical development of the maṇḍala to formulate conclusions about the chronological relationship between the *MMK* and the Hindu Kush proto-maṇḍalas. It is likely, however, that the lack of identifiable foreign images, particularly Hindu deities, in the Hindu Kush proto-maṇḍalas indicates that they represent an early stage in the development of the maṇḍala.

Another curious fact which may be related to this phase in the evolution of Mahāyāna imagery is the limited role of the Bodhisattva in the art of the Hindu Kush. Indeed, not only do Bodhisattvas occur infrequently, but there also appears

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁸ Joshi, *Studies in the Buddhistic Culture*, p. 321.

⁹⁹ D. Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁰⁰ R. Ray, *Maṇḍala Symbolism in Tantric Buddhism*, pp. 138-141.

to be only one type, Maitreya, who is found in three variants, as shall be discussed in chapter VII. Here too, it is interesting to refer to the *Mahāvastu*, where the Bodhisattva's career is important because it demonstrates the progress to Buddhahood; but there is no Bodhisattva worship implied¹⁰¹.

These three texts allow us to understand the wide range of religious concerns that may have been active in Bāmiyān. As evidence of the contemporary religious climate, the proto-Mahāyāna *Mahāvastu*, the Mahāyāna *Śrī-mālā*, and the proto-Tantric *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* provide the background against which the themes and processes found in the Mahāyāna art of Central Asia and northwest India during the seventh and eighth centuries can be understood.

However, with regard to the iconographic themes at Bāmiyān, it is another text associated with the Mahāyāna, the *Lalitavistara*, that narrates the career of the Buddha Śākyamuni according to the trans-mundane perspective found in the *Mahāvastu*. In the beginning of the *Lalitavistara*, the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni, now residing in the Tuṣita Heaven, is described as having received consecration and having accomplished the Ten Bhūmis¹⁰². Chapters 2-4 relate the events preceeding the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni's descent to earth including the appointment of his successor, the Buddha-to-be Maitreya.

The actual literary evidence for Buddhism in the Hindu Kush is insufficient for a definition of the religious doctrines and practices at Bāmiyān. It must be remembered that the *Mahāvastu*, the canonical text of the Lokottaravādins, is only one indication of a general transformation of Buddhism. This text included docetic speculations, emphasis on the spiritual career of the Bodhisattva, and espousal of the efficacy of Buddhabhakti, devotion to the Buddha.

A study of the iconography of the art of the Hindu Kush is important for it reflects a phase in Mahāyāna art not previously identified. The transcendent image of the Buddha described in the *Mahāvastu* and the proto-maṇḍalas of the *MMK* and the Hindu Kush all express a cosmic vision that is greatly expanded in later Vajrayāna art.

In the texts discussed, the association of the Buddha with royal symbolism and glorification of the monarch can be understood within the broader concepts of the *cakravartin* and the lay Bodhisattva. Both these concepts encouraged the participation of the monarch in religious affairs. These ideas were no doubt an important part of the philosophical justification for the merging of Buddhism with the state, as later occurred in Tibet.

The iconography identified in the art of Bāmiyān, as well as the surrounding regions of Swat, Gilgit, Baltistan, Khotan, Kucha, and Tun-huang indicates a transitional doctrinal phase, which is no longer confined to early Mahāyāna philosophy, but clearly indicates a tendency toward Vajrayāna.

As we have seen in western Central Asia and India, the Buddhist art of the seventh to eighth centuries frequently contains esoteric imagery. But, in eastern Chinese Central Asia from the eighth to ninth centuries at Tun-huang we already have maṇḍalas associated with a philosophical system that included the complex meditational and ritual practices of the Yoga Tantras as known from contemporary Japanese (Shingon) Buddhism and later western Himālayan art. These complex meditational images are found in painted banners and drawings, none of which survives from the western Himālayas prior to the late tenth century.

¹⁰¹ Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 203.

¹⁰² *Lalitavistara*, trans. Ph. Ed. Foucaux, t. 16, pp. 3-4; t. 19, pp. 4-5; *Lalitavistara*, ed. S. Lefmann, p. 1.

Vajrayāna art certainly existed in historical northwest India in the late tenth century when Rin-chen bZang-po began importing artists from Kashmir into western Tibet. At least, one can say that the development of Vajrayāna Buddhist art in Kashmir from the late ninth century must have been preceded by a period of experimentation when esoteric iconographic forms were gradually integrated into the Buddhist visual vocabulary. It is not surprising then to identify the seventh to eighth centuries art of eastern Afghanistan with this formative period in esoteric Buddhist art; the formal elements of Kashmiri art in the ninth to tenth centuries can clearly be derived in part, from the earlier art of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

PART II

THE ART
OF THE HINDU KUSH

Chapter V

The Archaeological Sites of the Hindu Kush Sixth to Ninth Centuries

The wind and snow keep on without intermission [...] The mountain spirits and demons (demon sprites) send, in their rage, all sorts of calamities; robbers crossing the path of travellers kill them. Going with difficulty 600 *li* [200 miles] or so, we leave the country of Tukhāra, and arrive at the kingdom of Fan-yen-na (Bāmiyān).

This kingdom is about 2000 *li* from east to west, and 300 *li* from north to south. It is situated in the midst of the Snowy Mountains [...].

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 49)

The pelting hail and snowstorms go on perpetually intermingled; then, the winding and crooked passes that are met with [...]

Alas! if it were not that I had determined to seek the incomparable Law for the sake of all that lives, much rather would I have pleaded that this body of mine, left by my parents, should have gone on its (last) journey (i.e., that I should have died).

(*The Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, by Shaman Hwui Li, p. 52)

In addition to the much ruined fortresses and fortifications, there are five remaining archaeological complexes within the Hindu Kush dating to the pre-Islamic period. Nigār is the only extant site in the Hindu Kush contemporaneous with the center in the Bāmiyān Valley which is located on the northern routes. To the southeast and the southwest of the Bāmiyān Valley are found Folādi and Kakrak. Both these sites are located on small tributaries of the Bāmiyān River which runs through the Bāmiyān Valley and along which is built the rock-cut Buddhist complex. To the east, was the monastery of Fondukistān located on the Ghorband River, on the main trade route connecting the center in the Bāmiyān Valley with the capital city of Kapiśa at Begrām.

None of these has been scientifically excavated. Although a brief excavation did take place at Fondukistān, the excavation notes were lost during World War II. A brief summary of the Fondukistān excavation as well as surveys of the other sites have been published¹. Of these sites, the largest and most important was Bāmiyān.

¹ Godard et al., *Les antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*; Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*; Dagens, Le Berre, and Schlumberger, *Monuments préislamiques d'Af-*

Here were located the royal palace as well as the administrative and religious centers of the kingdom of Bāmiyān.

Bāmiyān and the Buddhist Complex

It was from this capital, within the Bāmiyān Valley, that the kingdom was ruled. The valley, lying at 8,480 feet above sea level, is framed by a red rock façade on the northern side, which reaches an average height of about 300 feet. At the widest point at the northern side of the valley are colossal statues of the Buddha; here also Buddhist cave complexes are carved into the face of the cliff. To the west of this complex was the capital city, also set against the face of the cliff. Due to Bāmiyān's location on the principal India-China trade route, the capital had a large bazaar, which was no doubt filled with merchants and goods from all along the route when international trade was at its peak. Next to the city was the palace. The proximity of the city and the royal palace to the Buddhist complex, along with the rituals performed there by the king, indicates that the Bāmiyān Valley was the religious, as well as the political and commercial, center of the Hindu Kush.

The complex consisted of the six Buddhas (three colossal and three smaller) facing the valley, and hundreds of small, rock-cut chapels. These chapels were supported by the grateful offerings of pilgrims, local residents, and merchants seeking safe passage on the long and dangerous routes beyond the valley. Judging from the façades of other Buddhist cave complexes in Central Asia and India, and the few remains at Bāmiyān, we can assume that Bāmiyān also had a series of rock and wooden staircases leading across the face of the cliff and giving access to the different cave complexes, which were fronted by elaborately carved wooden façades. Unfortunately, the red conglomerate cliff is composed of three superimposed layers of conglomerate rock, pebbles, and sand. Being extremely fragile, the entire cliff has been eroding over the centuries. Its original façade, brightly painted and gilded, is lost. Also, the collapse of this connective system has left most of the caves at Bāmiyān inaccessible. Still, enough remains of the complex itself to partially reconstruct its original appearance.

The caves have been identified alphabetically, usually from East to West, by the D.A.F.A. (*Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan*) archaeologists. The system allows a letter for each complex. Unfortunately, it is not a consistent system, making the location of the caves difficult to remember. The system also does not correspond to Hsüan-tsang's description, since he described the site from West to East. Despite the inconvenience of the D.A.F.A. system, I have decided to retain it for this study because the more famous images have been known by these letters for decades. A team from Kyoto University has made a photogrammetrical survey of the façade. Their new numbering system, and a concordance with the original D.A.F.A. system, is found in Appendix I. In Appendix III the recent Indian conservation work conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India is discussed by R. Sengupta, chief of the mission.

To the west of the ravine (Map 2) which separated the capital city from the Buddhist complex, the cliff was punctuated at three points by the aforementioned giant statues of the Buddha. These were decorated with gold, various colors and

ghanistan; U. Scerrato, 'A Short Note on Some Recently Discovered Buddhist Grottoes near Bāmiyān, Afghanistan,' pp. 94-120; Hackin et al., *Diverses recherches*.

jewels. As reported by Hsüan-tsang, and following Watter's interpretation, the largest image, the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa, was at the eastern end². No trace has yet been found of the image, nor of either of the two monasteries reported by Hsüan-tsang — one of which was associated with the Mahāparinirvāṇa Buddha. Perhaps this enormous statue is partially preserved beneath the fallen cliff. At the western end is still found the 55-meter colossus, which Hsüan-tsang identified only as a Buddha. The central statue is identified by him as Śākyamuni (now known as the 38-meter Buddha). They are also known respectively as the West and East Buddhas. In front of the cliff, between the Śākyamuni and the Mahāparinirvāṇa Buddhas, are the remains of a large stūpa. To the west of Śākyamuni are three smaller Buddhas in niches that open to the valley.

Folādi

The valley of Folādi, which is the largest secondary valley of Bāmiyān, contains a number of caves located on either side of a small ravine near the village called Deh-i-Ahangaran. This ravine is about four kilometers southwest of the central Bāmiyān façade containing the colossal Buddhas.

Originally, the numerous caves on the western side of the ravine reached four or five stories. There are also fortifications at the point where the ravine opens onto the main Folādi Valley.

Folādi appears to have been an extensive Buddhist complex. Today completely in ruins, it is difficult to interpret the functions of the architecture or the original artistic configurations that decorated the rock-cut chambers. There is no sculpture and only fragments of painting remain on the ceilings. As with the other sites, there has been no excavation here and the results of only two brief surveys have been published³. All the surviving painting is from the same period. The compositions and iconography are similar to those of the Buddhist complex in the Bāmiyān Valley. But the paintings at Folādi are the latest of the Buddhist paintings of the Hindu Kush (Figs. 16, 25).

Kakrak

To the southeast and about three miles from the central façade of the Bāmiyān Valley is the Kakrak Valley, which also contains a Buddha statue sculptured into the rock and facing the valley (Fig. 102). The standing figure of the Buddha is about six meters tall. Only a few inaccessible caves are located near this statue. One chapel was surveyed and its paintings are now at the Kabul Museum and the Musée Guimet in Paris.

Fondukistān

In the Ghorband Valley, 128 kilometers east of Bāmiyān on the route from Bāmiyān to Kapiśa and Kabul, are located the ruins of a Buddhist monastery that

² Watters, *Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p. 118. Watters says, 'In the D text and in the Fang-chih the Monastery of the nirvana Buddha is only 2 or 3 li from the capital and this is probably accurate' (p. 119). See also Pelliot's translation in Godard, *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, pp. 78-81.

³ Dagens, Le Berre, and Schlumberger, *Monument préislamiques*; Scerrato, 'A Short Note...'.

Chapter VI

A Relative Chronology for the Buddhist Art of the Hindu Kush

To the north-east of the royal city there is a mountain, on the declivity of which is placed a stone figure of Buddha, erect, in height 140 or 150 feet. Its golden hues sparkle on every side, and its precious ornaments dazzle the eyes by their brightness.

To the east of this spot there is a convent, which was built by a former king of the country. To the east of the convent there is a standing figure of Śākya Buddha, made of metallic stone (teou-shih), in height 100 feet. It has been cast in different parts and joined together, and thus placed in a completed form as it stands.

To the east of the city 12 or 13 li there is a convent, in which there is a figure of Buddha lying in a sleeping position, as when he attained Nirvāṇa. The figure is in length about 1000 feet or so.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 50-51)

This chapter presents a relative chronology for the Buddhist paintings of the Hindu Kush based on stylistic analysis and supported by numismatic and textual evidence as discussed in Part I. Clear stylistic differences, such as those between the paintings of the east-side wall of the 55-meter Buddha (Fig. 48) and those of Fōlādi (Fig. 16) might be explained as coexisting styles; but the large number of architectural units existing at Bāmiyān alone and the grandiose conception of the external statues suggest that the paintings could not all have been completed at the same time. Some chronological development, if only within a short period of time, must be observable.

Until now, the inconsistent methods applied to the study of the paintings of the Hindu Kush, combined with the incomplete evidence, have prevented a coherent view of the relationship of all the paintings and their chronological development. Before turning to method and analysis we must review the limitations of our information.

The most critical obstacle for an analysis is the fragmentary nature of the paintings which complicates the historical analysis of a single element. It is almost impossible to find a composition or series of images which are intact (i.e., whole bodies, facial features, costume). Since a single figure cannot be considered representative of the style of the whole visual configuration, it is difficult to date an entire composition. This is because the mode of representation of a particular figural type is determined by the subject and its placement in the composition. Thus, several styles can coexist in one composition.

In summation, there are no elements which provide dates around which one can construct an absolute chronology for any of the sites: (1) No coins, epigraphic inscriptions, or texts contain reliable information about the ruling dynasty or other historical aspects of Bāmiyān in the pre-Islamic period. The wall paintings are therefore the largest body of primary information. However, these have no decipherable inscriptions. (2) There is only minimal archaeological evidence, such as the coins discovered in a funerary jar at Fondukistān. The one small dig at Bāmiyān did not reveal coins, pottery, or stratigraphy (see Descriptive Catalogue B, cave G and footnote 1). The excavation report by Carl about Fondukistān is lost and no archaeological data are provided by Hackin's published notes. He only visited the site but did not excavate it. (3) No complete art historical sequence of a single theme can be established. (4) There are only two eye-witness accounts of the Buddhist sites in the Bāmiyān Valley and there are no textual references to Kakrak, Folādi, or Fondukistān.

Despite these limitations the textual evidence of the two East Asian pilgrims who visited the site, contemporaneous Arabic sources, and the archaeological evidence provide six main points which serve as a framework for a relative chronology of Hindu Kush painting.

- (1) The three colossal Buddhas had been constructed by the time Hsüan-tsang visited the Bāmiyān Valley in ca. A.D. 632.
- (2) At that time he attributed the construction of the main monastery of the Buddhist center to the previous king.
- (3) The paintings of Fondukistān, a site which Hsüan-tsang does not mention, were created after A.D. 689 (700 A.D. is a working hypothesis).
- (4) The Buddhist center at Bāmiyān was large and thriving and the kingdom of Bāmiyān was prosperous when Hui-ch'ao visited Bāmiyān in A.D. 727.
- (5) Then in 737 the Tudun of Bāmiyān is reported in Khuttal.
- (6) Muslim armies invaded Bāmiyān between 745-785, in 841 and 871. Buddhist communities continued to be active in Bāmiyān until the end of the tenth century.

Criteria for a Stylistic Analysis

In the art of the Hindu Kush we can identify a limited stylistic development exemplified by the changes in the canon of proportions and in the representation of specific artistic conventions, particularly the drawing of facial features, limbs, and drapery, and the manner in which color is used to define the forms. Description (Descriptive Catalogue) and analysis (Appendix II) of the paintings throughout the Hindu Kush reveal the use of similar compositions and organizational techniques along with the repetition of a limited number of iconographic themes and artistic motifs. These motifs exhibit a limited stylistic development through two distinct phases and their six subdivisions. There is almost no evidence of repainting in either phase. I believe that the lack of repainting, the unbroken and consistent formal evolution of the paintings, and the consistent compositions and iconography indicate a continuous period of activity and homogeneous patronage.

Despite extensive limitations, certain criteria can be established which do allow us to analyse the paintings and to divide them into meaningful groups. These criteria are: (1) the technique of the painting, (2) the style of figures, (3) the color, (4) the composition.

Technique of Painting

The wall paintings in rock-cut Buddhist sanctuaries throughout Central Asia and India have a similar technique. It is not a fresco technique¹. The preparation of the ground for painting at Bāmiyān is common to cave sites throughout Central Asia. Clay mixed with vegetable fibers is spread over the surface of the cave wall to a thickness of 1.25 to 3.75 centimeters. Next, a thin white ground layer of burnt gypsum, or plaster of Paris, is applied. The pigment, in a binding of animal glue, is applied directly to this ground. The palette is fairly restricted. According to chemists of the Archaeological Survey of India, all pigments were procured from local materials, except for copper silicate (for green) and lapis lazuli (for blue); the latter is believed to have come from Badakhshan. Since Gettens' analyses, a number of new paintings have been discovered which may be later in date than the paintings from which his analyses were made, and which contain colors that did not appear in the paintings he examined; these are in caves B, C, and G in the area of the 38-meter Buddha. Gettens did not note vermilion (a striking feature of caves N and S) or bright green (Folādi).

Several decades after Gettens' analyses, a study was made of the pigments from eight cave sites ranging from Ajañṭā to Mongolia. Among these, only Bāmiyān and Kizil seemed to employ similar pigments — mainly copper silicate for green, lapis lazuli for blue (also found at Ajañṭā) — and a base coat composed of gypsum without lime².

Observation of the surface condition of some of the paintings shows three variants in painting techniques. Since they seem to indicate a chronological development, they will be noted in the following discussion. New discoveries and the recent cleaning of some of these paintings, as well as extensive archaeological work in Chinese Central Asia, indicate the need for a more comprehensive comparative chemical analysis of the paintings.

Style of Figures

All the paintings of the Hindu Kush are executed in one of two modes of representation. The general characteristics of these modes are as follows.

The hieratic mode (Mode 1) is characterized by frontal representations, lack of movement or plasticity, and a formalization of surface patterns. Its use is restricted to Buddhist images. The central, primary images of all the compositions are in this hieratic mode.

In the non-hieratic mode (Mode 2), the figures are depicted in three-quarter profile and on two occasions in full profile. Movement is indicated by gestures of the hands and head and by an implied movement of the torso made possible by more elongated proportions. While both modes are basically linear, a manipulation of tone and contour line in Mode 2 can produce a definition of form through color. Mode 2 is used for both secular and religious images.

The use of different stylistic modes of representation depending on the subject

¹ R. Gettens, 'Materials in the Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān, Afghanistan,' p. 87. The Archaeological Survey of India has prepared a new analysis in connection with their conservation work at Bāmiyān, but it is not yet published; there are apparently discrepancies with the earlier analysis by Gettens.

² Ibid., pp. 186-187; Yamasaki, 'Saiiki hekiga no ganryo ni tsuite' ('Pigments in the wall paintings in Central Asia').

matter and placement within the same composition, characterizes all the Buddhist painting of the Hindu Kush. This correlation between subject matter and style is established in the first phase at Bāmiyān, and remains consistent thereafter.

The central and most important figure in all the compositions is depicted in Mode 1. The secondary figures in the pictorial compositions are usually shown in Mode 2. Each iconographic type, moreover, has its own stylistic characteristics. Bodhisattvas have the sensuous Indianizing treatment of the human form, although they show the planar tendency popular in Central Asian art. Donor figures are represented in profile and are dressed in Central Asian costume; divinized royalty are depicted in similar costumes but in three-quarter view. Both types resemble examples of this subject found in Central Asian painting and metalwork. This distinctive use of stylistic modes provides a meaningful link between the art of Central Asia and that of Bāmiyān.

In all of the phases, the paintings of the Hindu Kush combined different stylistic modes within the same composition. This phenomenon has numerous parallels in the paintings of Central Asia. In her study of Khotanese painting, Williams has identified all the extant paintings as belonging to a 'mixed category which should be thought of as roughly contemporary' with each other³. The blending of the styles, which had been codified during the long history of Gandhāran and Gupta art, is considered by both Williams and Bussagli to have occurred during the seventh and eighth centuries. An identical phenomenon has also been recognized in Adžina Tepe during this same period⁴. And the use of heterogeneous styles is also found on two of the Gilgilt manuscript covers (Fig. 1)⁵.

Inconsistency in style among the parts of a complex visual composition has been a major obstacle to a study of chronology. Often just one small part of a composition survives, showing only one of the iconographic types that were represented. Since the subject as well as placement determine the style of the figure in the art of the Hindu Kush, the stylistic characteristics of a fragment cannot alone provide the date for the ensemble. Such is the case with the composition of the standing Buddhas in Cave C. The anomalies of Bāmiyān painting which suggest themselves in this fragment, such as the more complex treatment of space (use of architecture, decorative devices, and slight overlapping to create a shallow pictorial space) may have been less unusual than it now appears. This same phenomenon is also seen in the art of Khotan (Fig. 2). 'None of these apparent distinctions would be confused with developmental stages or even with substyles if the paintings could be seen as a whole'⁶.

Several stylistic aspects can be differentiated between Phase I and Phase II. In Phase II the canon of proportions is longer for both modes: the result being that the figures are more slender and elegant. The manipulation of line is stronger and more complex in Phase II; color is used to define form in a manner which is progressively more decorative, abstract, and varied.

³ Williams, *Khotanese Painting*, p. 134.

⁴ Gafurov et al., *Kushan Studies in the U.S.S.R.*, pp. 116-117.

⁵ Williams, *Khotanese Painting*, p. 155. Williams dates these paintings to the seventh and eighth centuries (p. 157).

⁶ Williams, *Khotanese Painting*, p. 135. This refers to Khotan and the difficulties in determining stages of stylistic development at a site which uses styles heterogeneously, and whose paintings are extremely fragmentary.

Color

There is a limited palette of pure colors with some differentiation between the two chronological phases. In Phase I earth tones with red, blue, black, white, and yellow are used. In Phase IIb vermilion and green are added. In Phase I color is used to define form, particularly in Mode 2; this technique in Phase II becomes progressively more dramatic and emphatic, e.g., the use of red to outline anatomical features and, in the last phase, white outlining a black body.

Composition

Variations within the style relate to the subject itself as well as the subject's function in the composition. The compositional devices themselves are generally uniform. Geometric division of space is a characteristic feature. The organization of space emphasizes the hieratic, frontal image, which is isolated at the center of each composition, and accords with the preference for hieratic compositions over narrative ones.

The same principles govern the decoration of all units at Bāmiyān, Kakrak, and Folādi. The central icon, a single sculpture, appears on the first, or ground level, usually on the north wall. In many of the caves the other walls also contain sculptures. The paintings in the niches and the caves are organized on the medial axis of this central icon and around a central painted figure at the summit, which in the caves is in the center of the ceiling, while in the niches the central figure is painted in a vertical panel at the center of the soffit. This central image is larger than all other painted images; always in Mode 1 (hieratic mode), it is oriented head south, feet north.

The conception of a central painted panel on the ceiling containing a single deity, which is frontally represented and larger than all other figures, is consistent in both phases. A distinctive feature in Phase I is the existence of secondary figures surrounding the central painted image and establishing the environment for the principal deity. In the second phase, the central figure is totally isolated and the secondary figures in the center panel are omitted. The compositions differ significantly in each phase. The earliest painting, the 38-meter Buddha niche, also has the simplest diagrammatic composition. In Phase II we find more complex diagrammatic compositions and the suppression of pictorial details.

There is a consistent use of formal devices: uniform geometric division of space, spatial isolation of each figure according to uniform aesthetic principles, and consistent correlation of style with subject and with the subject's function within the total composition. All of these formal devices contrive to create an image unrestricted by the concepts of space and time. There are no devices to give the illusion of depth. The one notable exception to this is the panel depicting a balcony with musicians and dancers in Niche 'i', where the use of architectural perspective in drawing the balcony, the lively and rhythmic movement of the figures, and the contrast of alternating black and white bodies create a sense of depth (see figures on either side of central band in Fig. 3). By contrast, there is the other balcony scene found at Bāmiyān in the 38-meter Buddha niche (Phase Ia, Fig. 4) where the absence of these devices is more in keeping with the planar tendencies of Hindu Kush paintings. Thus, the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush can now be seen as belonging to a single school.

Comparative Stylistic Analysis

Phase Ia: middle to second half of seventh century

(e.g., 38-meter Buddha niche)

Phase Ib: ca. second half of seventh century

(e.g., 55-meter Buddha niche)

Phase IIa, b: late seventh-early eighth centuries

(e.g., K, Niche H, Fondukistān, Kakrak, Niche 'i')

Phase IIc, d: eighth century or later

(e.g., Niche E, Folādi).

The earliest subdivision is Phase Ia and the final stage of development is found in Phase IIc. Within each of the two phases, there are some paintings which are placed between subgroups. That is, the examples cited can be placed chronologically while others seem to be transitional. The majority of the paintings of the Hindu Kush belong to the second phase. Phase II is distinguished by an original style with a new aesthetic which I have called the Bāmiyān Style. The most original examples of this style are found in Phase IIc, d.

Phase I

The earliest paintings of the Hindu Kush are distinguished by their derivative style and relatively simple compositions. Other than that, this initial phase is difficult to define and to date precisely.

Phase Ia (second half of the seventh century, e.g. the 38-meter Buddha niche). The poor surface condition of the remaining paintings indicates an inferior quality of either pigment or binding material. The entire painted surface is flaked, and the black paint delineating the details is so eroded that none of the facial features remains intact. In all of the paintings, the black paint tends to deteriorate first so that the red underdrawing is revealed. In Phase Ia the technical problem of securing the black color was notably unresolved, the black is really gray, paler than in other compositions from the Hindu Kush.

The paintings of the 38-meter Buddha niche are relatively two-dimensional. Contours are achieved by broad bands of color that are separated by brown or black lines; there is no indication of shading.

In Phase Ia stylistic and iconographic themes, as well as specific artistic conventions, may be traced to the art of Sogdia in Soviet Central Asia in the seventh century (see Appendix II for detailed discussions). Also, both types of male costumes shown here are represented at Kizil and also later in the art of northern Pakistan (particularly associated with Gilgit); in the latter group of objects the female dress is also prominent. Thus, these features seem less useful for attributing a relative date to this complex than considerations of style, composition, and technique of the painting. The derivative style, the simplified composition, and the technical problems implied by the present state of painting all indicate an early phase in the evolution of the art of the Hindu Kush. These features appear only in the Bāmiyān Valley.

The simplest form of organization of the artistic configuration appears in Phase I. In the 38-meter Buddha niche, the sculpture is surrounded by two distinct zones of painted figures in the niche. The central panel counts as one, the pair of symmetrical side panels — one each, equal two zones).

Phase Ib (second half of the seventh century, 55-meter Buddha niche). The sculp-

ture is surrounded by three painted zones in the niche. Phase Ib has essentially a linear style with more planar tendencies in the hieratic mode. The use of shaded contours in Mode 2 (non-hieratic) does not create volume, but emphasizes form. The shape can appear more sensuous in Mode 2 due to the Indianizing manner used for some subjects. Color is used decoratively in alternating combinations, but the thin fluid line of the freehand drawing is the most noteworthy feature of both modes in this phase (Fig. 8). The most significant parallels for Phase Ib are with the art of Kizil (Fig. 9) and Khotan (Fig. 10), and Farād-Bēg Yailaki from Khotan. Among the examples from the latter site, individual mannerisms that are most closely associated with Bāmiyān painting are considered to derive from Sogdian art. The paintings which can be compared to Phase Ib are dated from the middle to the end of the seventh century. Thus, the 55-meter Buddha niche may chronologically overlap with Cave K, the beginning of the Bāmiyān style.

Phase II (end of seventh through eighth and ninth centuries)

The artistic motifs appear to derive from Phase I of Bāmiyān, and for the most part show only slight stylistic modifications. The basic technique remains the same with certain technical improvements. New colors are introduced in different periods, the binding of the pigments and surface finishing is more successful.

A distinctive feature of Phase II is the more complex division of the pictorial compositions within each artistic configuration. Thus, while the central sculpted image in Phase I is surrounded by two and later three painted zones, in Phase II the Buddha sculptures are surrounded by as many as five painted zones. In Phase II no secondary figures are used to provide a temporal or dramatic setting for the principal painted image. Except for the occurrence in the balcony scene in Niche 'i', pictorial realism does not occur.

The Bāmiyān Style of Phase II can best be described as linear. While line drawing is the principal means of defining form, arbitrary bands of color are sometimes employed to enhance the contours. The slight change which can be determined within this style is a movement toward abstraction and a schematizing of the contour lines and of the geometric patterns. The use of abstract forms is particularly marked in the treatment of drapery and floral forms. This stylistic tendency reinforces the hieratic structure of all the compositions and the spaceless and timeless quality of the figures.

This pattern of development can be seen in Buddhist cave painting elsewhere. There is a tendency to move from plasticity, inherited perhaps from Gandhāran and Gupta art, to a more iconic style. This is also true for the non-Buddhist art of Sogdia.

At Kizil, the earlier full-bodied style with expressionistic qualities is succeeded by a more linear style whose contour lines are subtle and elegant. The paintings in the earliest caves at Tun-huang are characterized by a strong use of modelling that is progressively reduced. A similar movement toward this hieratic style is seen in India at Ajanṭā. The final phase of painting at Ajanṭā late fifth century is dominated by the preference for hieratic frontal scenes of the enthroned preaching Buddha⁷.

In the second stylistic phase in the late seventh century, stylistic influence from

⁷ Klimburg, 'Die Entwicklung des 2. indo-iranischen Stils' is the basis of the chronology for Kucha; W. Spink, 'The Splendours of Indra's Crown', among other publications, for Ajanṭā.

Kucha appear. We have no evidence to explain this occurrence, but it is possible that after the Chinese invasions of Kucha around A.D. 647, painters from Kucha migrated to Bāmiyān. This migration might have been encouraged by decreased patronage in Kucha. Political and economic contacts were established between the two sites when Kucha became the nominal Chinese administrative center for the western Hindu Kush.

The increase in artistic sophistication in the second phase of painting, as well as certain technical similarities, might be attributed to the experienced craftsmen from Kucha. For instance, the uniqueness of the composition in Niche 'i' may be explained by the hypothesis that the Bāmiyān painting is based on a Kizil painting, e.g., the scene in the Cave of the Musicians, Kizil (Fig. 18). Those features, which in the Hindu Kush are only found in Niche 'i' at Bāmiyān, are all used in the last phase of painting from Kizil dating just prior to the mid-seventh century. As already noted the most striking technical similarity is with regard to the pigments. Among eight sites analysed, Kizil and Bāmiyān showed a strong parallel in the pigments used.

Since significant features of the Bāmiyān style, and also in the earlier Phase I, can be clearly related to the art of Central Asia. An important question is to determine which was earlier, the painting at Bāmiyān (as believed previously) or paintings from the Central Asian centers? The relationships of the 55-meter Buddha niche painting to fragments from Khotan (particularly Farhād Bēg Yailaki) are particularly striking. However, in the face of contradictory dating for Khotan we find it difficult to decide whether Bāmiyān is earlier or later than Khotan. If the most recent dating to the sixth century (following Stein's original dates) is correct, then Bāmiyān would be later. The critical point in our analysis, however, seems to be Kizil. The points of relationship are so numerous that the reader must be referred to Appendix II and the Descriptive Catalogue for a complete discussion; however, one can summarize the following features here:

- 1) pigments: the same use of lapis lazuli blue, acid green and many brown tones, particularly from the beginning of Phase II;
- 2) stylistic features: the use of the thin double lines to define drapery and particularly the swirl under the arms; the proportions and figure style of the Maitreya Cave K; the use of contrasting black and white figures (e.g. Niche 'i');
- 3) composition: the figure of the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven depicted in the uppermost pictorial surface as an isolated motif (e.g. Niche H, Kakrak); standing Buddhas in panels decorating a cupola (e.g. Cave C and Folādi);
- 4) cultural features: the dress of the Bodhisattva Maitreya and the high-backed throne (e.g. Cave K); the use of the celestial musicians in a balcony motif (e.g. Niche 'i'); the presence of both Turkic- and Sasanian-type male costumes (e.g. 38-meter Buddha niche).

In most instances these features are so closely related that it is difficult to decide, which is necessarily earlier. Two points, however, seem to indicate that Bāmiyān followed closely after the last phase at Kizil.

The figure of the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven holds a prominent place in the art of the Hindu Kush. The compositional function and iconography of all of these figures are the same. However, a stylistic evolution can be clearly discerned. Of the remaining figures (the center of the soffit of the 55-meter Buddha niche may once have held this figure as well) the Maitreya in Cave K is clearly the earliest and the Maitreya in the soffit of Niche E the latest at Bāmiyān. Niche K figure (Fig. 5) can be compared to the figure from Kizil, but most striking is the fact that the Bāmiyān Maitreya is a synoptic version of the Kizil image which is

shown surrounded by the heavenly assembly in the Tuṣita Heaven. In keeping with the transcendental, non-narrative art of the Hindu Kush, the heavenly assembly is omitted. The image is shown as an isolated entity separated from the maṇḍala-like constellations, which surround it. Not only do these maṇḍala-like configurations represent a later phase in Buddhist art history than the compositions found in Kizil, but also at Bāmiyān we can understand a more developed stage of Mahāyāna.

The second point that allows us to date the Bāmiyān paintings later is that these Kizil features appear at the beginning of the development of the Bāmiyān Style. These same features at Kizil, on the other hand, occur in the last phase of the art of this large and cosmopolitan center, yet can be clearly seen to have a logical place in the development of the art of Kucha. And finally, the political upheavals that occurred in Kizil as a result of the Chinese conquest (647-648), and the subsequent Tibetan conquest and Chinese reconquest, provide ample historical justification for the flight of Kizil artists at different times from their homeland. The fact that Bāmiyān was a newly thriving center with strong political, economic, and probably cultural connections to Kizil, further justifies our hypothesis⁸.

We thus are able to add to the chronological framework, outlined at the beginning of the chapter, that the first phase of Kizil influence should be dated after 650. The presence of Kizil features later may be the result of a subsequent influx of Kizil artists or internal development of this influence within the Bāmiyān Style. The relative chronological development of this art can be defined on stylistic grounds. The fixed point in the development of Phase II is Fondukistān ca. A.D. 700. Thus Phase I, which precedes Phase II, should not be later than the end of the seventh century. The paintings, which could not have been begun until the colossal sculptures were finished, need not have been completed by Hsüan-tsang's visit. However, they must have been finished within that general period. It therefore does not seem necessary here to decide between the conflicting dates offered for Khotanese painting. Also, it does not seem possible to propose an absolute chronological relationship to Sogdia. Rather, in chapter III we tried to establish a common cultural context which would assist us in understanding the similarity in the treatment of the courtly figures in the Hindu Kush and Sogdia.

A more critical and confusing factor for the establishment of the chronology of the art of the Hindu Kush is the relationship to the arts of northern Pakistan, which are datable to the late seventh, early eighth centuries. In chapters VII and VIII the several iconographic features in the Hindu Kush — Buddhist and courtly — found also in the art of northern Pakistan, will be enumerated. Unfortunately the study of this art (particularly that attributed to Gilgit) has only just begun, so that the historical significance of this relationship is still not clear.

Phase IIa, b (end seventh to first quarter of the eighth century, e.g., Cave K, Niche H, Niche 'i,' Kakrak, Fondukistān). For an example, compare Cave K (Fig. 5), Mode 1, to an example from Kizil (Fig. 17), and the Gilgit manuscript covers (Figs. 1, 11). The example from the Cave of the Musicians at Kizil is dated to just before 647-648. The Bāmiyān example, Cave K, is considered later than the Kizil painting and the earliest example in Phase IIa. An example (Fig. 14) of Mode 2 can be compared with examples of the Gilgit manuscript covers (Figs. 1, 11) which are attributed to the seventh or to the early eighth century. It is also instructive to compare the flying divinities in Niche H (Fig. 12) with those in the 55-meter Buddha

⁸ A. von Gabain, 'Von Kuča (Kusan) nach Bāmiyān'. After this present study was presented as a Doctoral Dissertation at Harvard, von Gabain's article appeared, expressing a similar view.

niche attributed to Phase Ib (Fig. 13). See Appendix II for a more detailed discussion; in brief, these figures in Niche H are a much simplified version of the same figures in the 55-meter Buddha niche.

In addition to art historical evidence, archaeology provides evidence for the date of one painting in this group. In the exploration of Fondukistān, the French delegation found some coins in a funerary urn, the latest of which is dated to 689 A.D.⁹ The burial probably occurred at the time the niche was built and the painting is therefore probably later than A.D. 689. Archaeological and art historical evidence indicates that all the art of Fondukistān was created during the same period. The painting of the Bodhisattva (Fig. 14) located at the entrance to this niche, represents a later stylistic development within Phase IIa.

Although ideally, stylistic comparison between painting and sculpture is best avoided, Fondukistān sculpture can be considered the plastic equivalent of this phase of Hindu Kush painting. Fondukistān sculptures can be compared to Kashmiri and north Pakistan sculpture of the late seventh and eighth centuries as well.

Phase IIc (eighth century, e.g., Niche E, Fig. 15) and *Phase IId* (eighth to ninth centuries, e.g., Folādi, Fig. 16) are characterized by the same aesthetic principles. No precise parallels can be cited for Phase IIc. The most original expression of the Bāmiyān Style is represented in Phase IIc in the paintings of Niche E. These paintings represent the culmination of the Bāmiyān Style and the most dramatic expression of its linear and planar characteristics.

Phase IId (Folādi): The tendencies seen in Niche E are carried to their most extreme conclusion. Thus, the human body is reduced to diagrammatic patterns. The combination of thick outlines with flat color, particularly the use of dark figures highlighted with lines, probably derives ultimately from Kizil¹⁰. This characteristic dominates the last phase of the Indo-Iranian style at Kizil, just before the middle of the seventh century. The use of light and dark figures together produces an impression of relief in the Kizil compositions, as in e.g. the Hall of Māyā, the Hall of the Prayer Mills, and the Cave of the Painted Floor (Fig. 19). At Kizil the white lines on the black bodies suggest illumination. The Bodhisattva in the soffit of Niche E appears as an abstract patterned figure, at Folādi the even white outlines define the entire body and anatomical parts, thus reducing the figure to a diagram. The Hindu Kush examples appear to be a later schematized development of this theme. Phase IId cannot be adequately dated due to a lack of comparable paintings. However, the later evolution of this style can be identified in the art of the western Himalayas.

The closest parallels to these figures, in terms of both style and individual conventions, are early examples of the Indo-Tibetan style in western Tibet. An example of this style is a painting illustrated in Fig. 20 from the 'du-khang at Ta-pho. The beginning of the Indo-Tibetan painting style is attributed to Kashmiri artists by Tucci¹¹. These Kashmiri artists came to this area in the tenth century¹², and may well have been responsible for these paintings. An inscription gives the foundation date of Ta-pho as 996 A.D. No Kashmiri painting from this period is extant¹³. Some

⁹ Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte*, vol. I, p. 314.

¹⁰ White lines on black figures also exist in Kizil, but the effect is not so abstract.

¹¹ G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I, p. 272-273.

¹² Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, pp. 155-56.

¹³ Ibid. The frescoes of Mañ nañ, Ta pho, Alchi in Ladakh, and some manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitā* that Tucci found in mTho gliñ, are all later examples of western Tibetan art, which can be related to the earlier Kashmiri style.

indications of this lost painting style can be derived, however, from the Gilgit manuscript covers (Figs. 1, 11), which can be compared to the Bāmiyān style of Phase IIa, b; also some insights can be obtained from contemporary Kashmiri sculpture.

In discussing the painting from Ta-pho, it has been noted that the abstract shading within the anatomical sections is also found at Bāmiyān¹⁴; other features considered to be representative of Kashmiri painting are also found in the Bāmiyān paintings of the same subject. In the Ta-pho painting, certain conventions of the costume, such as the crown with rosettes and stiff floating streamers, and the types of necklaces, should be compared to Fig. 15. Also note such artistic conventions as the style of drawing the eyes, nose, and mouth, the long torso with broad sloping shoulders, and the diagrammatic treatment of the lotus. Another feature considered characteristic of this group of paintings is the greater freedom in the rendition of the secondary figures, despite a lack of corresponding compositional freedom. The latter demonstrate considerable finesse in drawing and a greater individualization than the large central figures¹⁵.

The earliest paintings at Ta-pho date to about A.D. 996. The Kashmiri painting which would have served as the source for the Indo-Tibetan style has not survived¹⁶. In the absence of Kashmiri painting up to the tenth century, one can best determine the nature of the relationship of Hindu Kush painting to Kashmiri painting by analysing other related evidence, particularly the sculpture.

The Colossal Sculptures of Bāmiyān

The sculptures of the Hindu Kush can be divided into four groups on the basis of their technique: stucco bas-reliefs that are part of the architectural decoration in the caves, stucco sculptures modelled in high relief (e.g., Cave G), earthen sculptures (e.g., Fondukistān), and the colossi that were constructed from a combined technique — the rock-cut sculpture having additives of different kinds including wood armatures covered with stucco.

Because of the importance of the two most famous colossal Buddhas of Bāmiyān, a brief analysis of them assists us in establishing a chronology for the construction of the Buddhist center at Bāmiyān. Sculptural remains from the Hindu Kush are extremely rare. Only a few fragments of sculpture remain from Bāmiyān, one from Kakrak, and none from Folādi. The more numerous sculptures from Fondukistān, which are of a different technique, will be discussed briefly in the Catalogue. The most important sculptures are the two remaining colossal Buddha images visited by Hsüan-tsang, both of which he described in his travel account, the *Si-yu-ki*¹⁷.

The 38-meter Buddha statue is carved in deep relief from the rear, north wall of the niche, leaving only the upper part of this back wall free for paintings. The core of the statue was carved out of the living rock. Over this was applied first

¹⁴ Huntington, 'Gu-ge Bris,' p. 111.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁶ The information available concerning Kashmiri painting prior to the tenth century is in fact non-existent. However, one can infer that a related style of Kashmiri painting could not have been earlier than the seventh century from the Gilgit manuscript covers and from the abundant sculptural remains mostly in metal and stone.

¹⁷ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 50-52.

a thick layer of mortar made of mixed earth and then a final stucco coating. A series of fine holes placed in regular patterns across the body of the statue assisted the stucco in adhering to the surface of the statue (Fig. 21). This technique allows the folds of all three garments to fall in an even and delicate pattern. The profile of the folds is low and gently rounded. Remains of blue paint can still be distinguished on the garment.

The forearms are now missing, but it is clear that they had been moulded around wooden armatures where there are traces of fire and ancient repair¹⁸. It is possible that the right hand was in abhaya mudrā (the gesture of fearlessness), and the left in varada mudrā (the gesture of charity), a combination often found in standing statues of Śākyamuni. The face of the Buddha, which has traces of gold paint, is missing from the top of the hair to just above the lips. The surface of this cut is absolutely vertical with a chase cut behind the lower lip. The form of the cut is also identical to that on the face of the 55-meter Buddha (Figs. 22, 21). The surface is completely flat without any holes, and there is no sign of vandalism or random destruction, only traces of charcoal.

Fortunately, Hsüan-tsang was sufficiently impressed with the colossi to leave us a rather good description of their condition; today they are quite deteriorated. 'To the east of the [k'ie-lan convent (saṃghārāma)], there is a standing figure of Śākya Buddha made of metallic stone (teou-shih), in height 100 feet. It has been cast in different parts and joined together, and thus placed in a completed form as it stands'¹⁹.

There have been several suggestions concerning the precise meaning of the term *teou-shih*. Most likely the term means 'brass.' Most scholars agree that some parts of the image were covered with brass. The text has been interpreted as saying that the hands and face of the Buddha (i.e., the uncovered parts of the body) were made of metal. It is most unlikely, however, that the whole statue was covered with a thin layer of metal, as some scholars have suggested²⁰, since the stucco surface of the Buddha's garments would not have been so finely finished and painted. Hsüan-tsang's experience with cast metal statues in China could easily have allowed him to think that the entire figure was cast in pieces and then assembled²¹. It may be that the 38-meter Buddha statue was also 'covered with gold leaf and metal ornaments,' just as the other two colossi which have been specifically described in this manner²², not only because a profusion of ornamentation distinguished the colossal Buddhas on either side of the 38-meter Buddha, but also because bejewelled Buddhas were obviously popular in the Hindu Kush (see chapter VII and Descriptive Catalogue).

Hsüan-tsang's contention that the statue was assembled from separate pieces is the only possible explanation for the present condition of the faces of both remaining colossi. Recent research (Appendix III) confirms that the face must have been made of a wooden mask. It might have been covered with brass or possibly

¹⁸ See R. Sengupta, Appendix III; G. Fussman, 'Nouvelle découverte à Bamiyan'.

¹⁹ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 51.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 51, fn. 176; Godard et al., *Antiquités bouddhiques*, p. 80, fn. 251; Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, pp. 118-119; A. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, p. 27.

²¹ Soper, 'South Chinese Influences on the Buddhist Art of the Six Dynasties Period,' p. 48, says that from the end of the fourth century, bronze figures twice the size of a man could be cast in China.

²² Rowland, *Art and Architecture*, p. 171.

gilded²³. The mask would have been anchored in the deep trough behind the ledge above the lower lip. There is no other reasonable explanation for this depression (Fig. 21). It is quite possible that metal ornaments, jewels, and even a crown were attached to this mask. Metal earrings may have been affixed to the head in the deep grooves under the stucco ears. Such a system would have allowed the changing of the Buddha's raiments on ceremonial occasions, a custom attested to in India. The lower arms and hands of the image, now missing, would have been fabricated in the same way with a brass surface over a wooden armature (see Appendix III).

Four hundred meters to the west of the small Buddha, in a trilobe niche, is carved the 55-meter Buddha (Fig. 21). The statue forms the focus and axis of the painted figures in the niche. Recent excavation has revealed that the original base was about two meters deeper than at present; see Appendix III. Unfortunately, Hsüan-tsang was not specific in identifying this Buddha. According to Hsüan-tsang:

To the northeast of the royal city there is a mountain, on the declivity of which is placed a stone figure of the Buddha, erect, in height 140 or 150 feet. Its golden hues sparkle on every side, and its precious ornaments dazzle the eyes by their brightness²⁴.

The niche and the Buddha's body are more harmoniously treated than the niche and the body of the 38-meter Buddha. The 55-meter Buddha's legs are slightly off center. The face, as with the smaller Buddha, has a vertical cut above the lips (Fig. 22). As stated previously, the colossal Buddhas probably had the exposed parts of their bodies covered in metal. The brass face may also have been gilded²⁵. It is clear from Hsüan-tsang's description that this statue was, in addition, decorated with jewels (perhaps glass, metal, or colored stones). At Haḍḍa, recent excavations have revealed the use of red glass to imitate rubies in jewellery and to indicate the Buddha's *ūrṇā*.

The construction of the 55-meter Buddha is essentially a more sophisticated version of the technique used to construct the smaller Buddha sculpture. In the case of the larger Buddha the foundation of the body and all the head is sculpted from the rock. But, in the lower part of the right side the leg and arm still show the hollows where an armature had once been. Around the armature the missing sections were built up of mixed earth, the whole then covered with stucco; the details of the hair and garments were moulded in the stucco.

On the right thigh of the 55-meter Buddha, above the destroyed legs, one can see the holes that had originally held wooden stakes. Cords were twisted around the stakes and served as a base for the lime plaster from which the folds were moulded. This base is exposed in some places. The forearms were not sculpted but built from mortar and plaster around wooden armatures.

The chief points distinguishing the 55-meter Buddha are: (1) its far greater height, (2) the pointed cowl neck of the shawl at the center of the chest, (3) the holes above the houlders, probably meant to support shoulder flames, and (4) perhaps the abhaya-mudrā, although this may also have been the hand gesture of the smaller Buddha.

²³ Tarzi, *L'Architecture et le Décor Rupestre des Grottes de Bāmiyān*, p. 196. He came to a similar conclusion independently. Tarzi says (p. 104-105), the present image is a later extensive restoration. I find the repairs not so extensive. See Appendix III and Fussman, 'Nouvelle découverte'.

²⁴ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 50-51.

²⁵ Tarzi, op. cit. Tarzi dates this Buddha not earlier than the fifth century A.D. (p. 106) prior to the 38-meter Buddha (restoration of the seventh century?). He also feels that a jewelled cloth was attached to the image.

In the photograph of the 55-meter Buddha illustrated in Fig. 22 one can see above the shoulders groups of holes. These holes suggest the original existence of shoulder effulgences. This possibility had been previously proposed by Rowland, who wrote in 1947, 'On the shoulders of the large image at Bāmiyān are structures with niche-like openings as in a dove cote. A possible explanation for these edifices is that they may have formed the armatures for shoulder flames — symbolical representations of the Buddha's magic "tejas" as it is often shown in the statues of Gandhāra [...]'²⁶, specifically at Kapiśa, such as Shotorak and Paitāvā.

In order to prevent further erosion, these areas had been covered with plaster several decades ago. I therefore could not examine the holes when I visited the site. Based on the photographic evidence, however, I support Rowland's hypothesis.

The most striking comparisons to these Buddha figures with their hieratic attitudes, awkward proportions, and large heads are found in the statues from the Kapiśa region, such as from Paitāvā and Shotorak (Fig. 23). Despite the differences in size and material, the images from Shotorak and Paitāvā have the same treatment of the drapery, 'by means of series of string-like, quilted ridges, the folds are reduced to a schematic, linear formula'²⁷.

On the basis of the most recent archaeological and art-historical research, I believe that these sculptures can be dated to the sixth century A.D.²⁸. A new examination of the sculptures from the Kapiśa region would greatly assist us in clarifying the origins of the style and iconography of the sculpture of the Hindu Kush.

A Relative Chronology for the Art of the Bāmiyān Valley

The earliest extant painting in the Bāmiyān Valley dates to the seventh century; the Bāmiyān Style spread from there to Kakrak and Fondukistān and finally Folādi from the eighth century. It exhibited a relatively limited development of consistent artistic motifs and compositional mechanisms; the slight variations indicate an evolutionary tendency toward a more hieratic style and a more iconic composition. The homogeneity in style, organization, and iconography suggests the possibility of centralized planning for the Bāmiyān complex. The absence of repainting suggests a relatively short period of activity. The close relationship in the style and iconography between the other sites of the Hindu Kush and the art of Bāmiyān indicates that all the art shared a similar source of patronage and doctrinal orientation. The differences between the various architectural complexes could be understood as chronological. For example, the differences between the painting of Folādi and that of the 38-meter niche at Bāmiyān can be accounted for by the fact that Folādi was the latest and the 38-meter Buddha niche paintings were among the earliest, examples of the same artistic school.

Probably the two extant colossal statues of the Buddha at Bāmiyān can be dated no earlier than ca. A.D. 600.

The first undisputed literary reference to Bāmiyān occurs in the T'ang annals in A.D. 627. The first reported visit of a Chinese pilgrim to Bāmiyān is Hsüan-tsang's, ca. A.D. 632.

Although it does seem that the Chinese were aware of Bāmiyān in the fifth cen-

²⁶ Rowland, 'The Colossal Buddhas at Bāmiyān,' p. 72.

²⁷ Rowland, *Ancient Art from Afghanistan: Treasures of the Kabul Museum*, p. 65.

²⁸ See Chapter III for a review of the archaeological research. There are numerous other iconographic affinities between the arts of Kapiśa and the Hindu Kush.

ture, Soper believes that these references are too vague to indicate any particular interest in the valley, prior to the seventh century²⁹. The inference is quite clear that Bāmiyān was simply not important enough to warrant either literary notice or a visit. It is not unlikely that a Buddhist settlement did exist there, perhaps from an early time. In the sixth century, political and economic factors which caused an increase in activity at other Buddhist sites in eastern Afghanistan also affected the Hindu Kush. From the mid-sixth to the mid-eighth centuries, the Yabghu of the Western Turks, whose capital was in Tukhāristān, was the nominal overlord of the Hindu Kush. From the end of the sixth and through the seventh centuries, there was a significant increase in international trade. The increased artistic activity in the Hindu Kush at this time may be considered a direct result of the increased prosperity resulting from the trade between China and India. I suggest that it was at this time that the central trade route near the Bāmiyān Valley became important. As a result the monasteries along the route expanded and the grandiose scheme of the central complex in Bāmiyān was conceived and work on the colossal sculptures begun.

A point in favor of the hypothesis that the colossal sculptures were not completed very long before Hsüan-tsang's visit is Pelliot's interpretation of the pilgrim's report on Bāmiyān, which says that the monastery associated with the Mahāparinirvāṇa sculpture was constructed by a 'former' king, not an 'ancient' one, as Beal translated the sentence. The connotation of the Chinese is a king of the previous generation³⁰. In that case, the patron may have been T'ung Shih-hu, Yabghu of the Western Turks, A.D. 618-630. An ardent Buddhist, he also was active in expanding his empire to the southeast as far as Kapiśa. The practices of remote patronage and long-distance pilgrimage were both well-known in this period. The Turkic patronage of Buddhist sites in the region is also known in Afghanistan but not recorded in the Hindu Kush. Possible sources of patronage during the seventh and eighth centuries will be discussed in the two concluding chapters.

The location of the caves, particularly those which form a connective system around the colossal niches, indicate that the caves were carved out in relation to the colossi. The niches of the giant statues were therefore created first. In some of the caves sculpting and painting might have gone on simultaneously, although it is not likely. It was certainly impossible in the giant niches. The soft conglomerate rock of Bāmiyān is far more difficult to work with than the stone at Ajaṇṭā. The fragile nature of the Bāmiyān conglomerate, and the enormous dust it creates, would have made it impossible to work on the colossal sculptures and the paintings in the niches at the same time. The statues, therefore, would have had to be completed before the painting of the niches could begin. The different technique and the more awkward proportions of the central Śākyamuni have been considered indications of an earlier date for this statue than for the 55-meter Buddha. Repair of cracks in the niche before painting also indicates a chronological gap between the excavation of the niche and its painting. As the 38-meter Buddha niche is the axis of the composition of the façade, and the painting in the soffit is the description of the function of the Bāmiyān complex, it was probably painted first. Since the third statue of the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa has been lost, it is impossible to estimate when it was created.

²⁹ Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China*, p. 270.

³⁰ Godard, Godard, and Hackin, *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, p. 80. The text reads *sien-wang*, which implies a not-distant past; if the reference were meant to indicate 'an ancient king' it would read *kou-wang*.

Because of the proximity of the Buddhist complex to both the capital city and royal palace, the site would have been used as soon as possible. The remaining scaffolding holes suggests that the statues would not have been harmed by the scaffolding used for the painting. It is probable then, that the main icons were completed and began to be used in their religious context before the painting in the niches was complete. The natural desire to finish the public façade suggests that the two colossal niches were painted before the caves. This hypothesis is corroborated by the stylistic analysis.

A related question is the amount of time needed to sculpt the images and excavate the caves. As noted, the conglomerate at Bāmiyān is quite soft and easily worked. Based on present practices using only hand labor and simple tools, the statues could have been excavated in a few decades. The entire surface and all modelling is in stucco, a medium that is quickly manipulated. These observations concerning working the conglomerate and stucco, combined with Spink's extensive studies on Ajanṭā and other Indian cave sites³¹, indicate that it is not unreasonable to imagine that the colossal images could have been constructed within a few decades. The caves at the base of the 55-meter Buddha, and around the 38-meter Buddha niche were created next. The caves and smaller Buddhas and the painting of their niches followed.

During the decades and generations of working together, the painters of the Hindu Kush slowly evolved their own style. It is this more distinctive style, characterizing the majority of the painting at Bāmiyān and all the painting and sculpture at the other sites of the Hindu Kush, that I have called the Bāmiyān Style.

³¹ W. Spink, 'Ajanṭa Chronology: Cave II.' See bibliography for Spink's work on Indian cave temples. This study is greatly indebted to his work.

Chapter VII

Some Buddhist Themes in the Art of the Hindu Kush

It was thus he gradually arrived at Bāmiyān, the chief town of which possesses something like ten religious foundations, with several thousand priests; these belong to the Little Vehicle, according to the Lōkōttara Vādinah School [The Lokottaravādin of the Mahāsaṃghika].

(*The Life of Hsüen Tsiang*, by Shaman Hwui Li, p. 52)



Due to the fragmentary condition of the paintings, it is not possible to identify the complete iconographic program of each site of the Hindu Kush. The original function of the iconographic configurations are also no longer clear. The principal iconographic themes, however, can be discerned and understood as part of a coherent symbolic system. Comparison of these themes and motifs with contemporary artistic and literary evidence allows us to explain the original intention of the iconographic program sculpted in the rock façade in the Bāmiyān Valley.

In a Buddhist complex, the meaning of each image must be considered within the context of the entire composition. The painting and sculpture of each architectural unit forms a single symbolic configuration. At Bāmiyān, a sculptured Buddha image occupies the center of each configuration. This large-sized Buddha figure was originally painted and surrounded by wall-paintings of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, occasionally other heavenly figures and floral fill-ins. The hierarchical organization of each of these configurations, and the linear and schematic style of the figures, combine to project a harmonious vision of eternal, transcendent unity. Thus, centrality, axiality, and symmetry characterize both the style of the principal images and the organization of each architectural unit.

Iconographic Choices

The majority of the paintings in the Hindu Kush are in the Bāmiyān Style. The Bāmiyān Style is characterized by compositional and stylistic techniques that eliminate conventional references to time and space. Iconographic choices also emphasize this cosmic vision. The elimination of pictorial and narrative details results in iconic compositions. Earlier Buddhist art emphasized narrative and pictorial themes. In the earlier Buddhist art of Afghanistan and Pakistan, a linear composition of the narrative type using themes from daily life was frequently employed. The subjects were always meant to teach a particular moral derived from the life

of the Buddha Śākyamuni or his previous lives (*Jātakas* and *Avadānas*). Thus, devices, such as linear organization and continuous narration were used which made the subjects familiar and accessible to the viewer. Stylistic devices were employed which enhanced the accessibility of the images. The figures in the scenes were often in three-quarter profile and less frequently in profile which provided not only depth to the scene but the sense of an open space that included the viewer.

The iconic type of scene found throughout the Hindu Kush contrasted sharply with these earlier compositions. Neither the compositional mechanisms nor the themes employed provide an environment that is familiar to the viewer. Each of the figures is represented separately, most of them are depicted frontally. There are no scenes of daily life; with rare exceptions, deities and heavenly beings are represented. Both the compositional mechanisms and the iconographic themes distance the viewer from the pictorial space. The figures are often closed and aloof, suspended above the world of men and mundane concerns, creating a hierarchy where the viewer (mankind) is both separate and subordinate to the world of the gods.

The transitional phase of this development, that is, from narrative to iconic compositions, can be seen at other Buddhist cave centers such as at Ajanṭā in the late fifth century A.D. This change is paralleled in the doctrinal shift in emphasis from the historical to the spiritual career of Śākyamuni, which occurs in literature reflecting the development of Mahāyāna ideas. An example of this philosophical trend is the *Mahāvastu*. The iconographic choices in the art of the Hindu Kush reflect the same change in emphasis.

There are generally two types of visual configurations in Buddhist art, the iconic type and the pictorial-narrative type. The maṇḍala may be considered an example of the iconic type of image. Like all iconic images, the maṇḍala is directed toward a trans-spatio-temporal reality, one of psychic and cosmic dimensions. The pictorial-narrative type can be represented as a narrative or as a hieratic image. The historical moment is represented in such a way that it becomes a universal expression. In the art of the Hindu Kush, certain images of Śākyamuni derived from the pictorial-narrative type. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the colossal Buddhas at Bāmiyān stylistically derive from the representations of Dīpaṅkara and Śākyamuni at Kapiśa. In the latter representations, however, these Buddha images were still represented as hieratic images relatable to their narrative context.

The colossal statues at Bāmiyān represent the final stage in the development from narrative to iconic forms portraying the life of Śākyamuni, and represent the final development of the hieratic form into the cult image. Just as the images portraying different events in the life of the historical Buddha became more synoptic in, for example, the Gupta period sculpture of Sārnāth, so also the discussion of Śākyamuni's spiritual 'career' became more symbolic in Mahāyāna texts. The process of synthesizing the key theological concepts expressed in the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni into iconic images reached its culmination at Bāmiyān.

In the art of historical northwest India, one can trace the transition from the pictorial-narrative to the iconic type of composition through three stages. The early type of narrative frieze depicts a narrative (e.g., the life of the Buddha); here the Buddha or Bodhisattva is placed at the center of the composition, dominating each composition by his large size and position (Fig. 24)¹. The second stage can be seen in the large stelae of the Buddha at Shotorak where the secondary figures depict

¹ For example, H. Ingholt and I. Lyons, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, fig. 95.

well-known stories merely by their miniature presence (Fig. 23). The final stage is represented by the Bāmiyān colossi, where the image symbolizes not only the matrix of the legend from which it is derived, but also the theological concept that has become associated with it. This development occurs simultaneously with the appearance of a maṇḍala, a composition which also has an iconic function. Both types of images symbolize the cosmic nature of the deity and both develop within the same doctrinal context. This context can be identified in the early Tantric Buddhist literature of the period, such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (MMK) (see chapter IV).

The Maṇḍala

Although some of the diagrams in Hindu Kush Buddhist art, such as those at Kakrak, have been called maṇḍalas², this definition has never been clearly established. It will be useful, therefore, to determine the propriety of this definition. Our discussion is concerned here with the maṇḍala in its simplest form at the beginning of its development.

The maṇḍala can be described as a circle of symbolic forms with one symbol at the center and other symbols emanating from the center and arranged at the points of the compass. The importance of the maṇḍala lies not only in its function in meditation and ritual, but also in its symbolic power, which allows it to be interpreted on a variety of levels. The power of the maṇḍala, functionally and metaphysically, lies in its center.

No matter how complex the image became, it always remained oriented by its center, the most sacred of all its parts and the expression of its unity. This unity [...] embodied in the central deity, is conceived as the single, organic and unified expression of all the components of the maṇḍala and, thereby, of the entire manifest universe³.

Seen as a cosmic diagram, the maṇḍala is read from the center outward as representing the universe, and from the outside toward the center as its reabsorption⁴. The essential elements of the pattern that identify the maṇḍala are present in the visual diagrams in the art of the Hindu Kush: (1) a circle of symbolic forms, (2) one dominating image at the center, and (3) other figures (symbols) arranged around the center and oriented toward the four cardinal points⁵.

The trans-spatio-temporal cosmic reality symbolized by the maṇḍala is quite different from the historical reality depicted in earlier Buddhist art. The preference for maṇḍala-like diagrams is consistent with the total iconographic system that underlies the art of the Hindu Kush. In the art of the Hindu Kush, no narrative scenes or historical events are portrayed. Thus, the image is freed from specific associations to time and place, and can be represented by iconic images rather than pictorial-narrative schemes. The innovative nature of the compositions employed at Bāmiyān can be seen by contrasting the Bāmiyān paintings with another important

² Rowland, 'The Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān,' p. 42.

³ R. Ray, *Maṇḍala Symbolism in Tantric Buddhism*, p. 145.

⁴ Ibid., p. 146; G. Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Maṇḍala*, pp. 21 ff.

⁵ This identification of the maṇḍala is based on the concepts presented in Ray's study, *Maṇḍala Symbolism in Tantric Buddhism*. In this study he deals with the formation, symbolism, and function of the maṇḍala in esoteric Buddhism.

group of wall paintings from Ajaṇṭā in India. The pictorial-narrative organization of the images at Ajaṇṭā is suited to the historical and narrative themes that are the subjects of the paintings.

Each architectural unit in Bāmiyān has the same hierarchical organization. Since the total amount of material at this site is so vast, a concise description of each unit is provided in the Descriptive Catalogue. A reconstruction of the decoration of each unit is attempted. In some architectural units, the central icon, a single sculpture, appears on the first or ground level and is usually on the north wall. In many of the caves, the other walls also contain sculptures. The paintings in the niches and the caves are organized on the medial axis of this central icon and around a central painted figure at the summit, which in the caves is at the center of the ceiling, while in the external niches, the central figure is painted in a vertical panel at the center of the soffit. This central image is larger than all other painted images and is always in the hieratic mode and is oriented head south, feet north. In the caves the compositions conform to the architectural forms which in turn dictate the patterns of the composition. When decorating a dome, the figures surround the central image in concentric circles as in Cave F. When decorating a vault, they are in vertical rows as in Cave K (Fig. 5), and when decorating a lantern roof they follow the beams as in Cave N. In the external niches, the two borders that are parallel to the central panel contain figures which are perpendicular to the central image as in Niche 'i' (Fig. 3). Compositionally, these borders are equivalent to the circles surrounding the central image on the dome of the caves. The painting and sculpture of each architectural unit combine to form a single iconographic configuration.

The total symbolic configuration, as well as the maṇḍala-like composition painted on the ceilings of the caves and the soffits of the niches, can be considered icon types. The painted compositions on the soffits of the niches are in essence open versions of the closed (circular) compositions in the caves. The compositions that most clearly resemble maṇḍalas are found on the ceilings of G1, F, N, and XI, as well as one at Kakrak (Fig. 26). The compositions on the soffits of Niches E and H are open forms of the compositions in G1 and K, and on the dome at Kakrak. The deity painted at the center of the soffit of the niches is the same as the one in the center of the compositions painted on the ceilings of the caves. I propose, therefore, that the compositions in the niches served the same symbolic function as the compositions on the ceilings of the caves. In other words, we are dealing with a phenomenon which Soper⁶ earlier characterized as the 'Dome of Heaven Theme' — the transformation of a ceiling into a symbolic depiction of the universe.

There are two expressions of this theme: the circular diagram with a concentric composition and the oblong diagram, which also has a concentric composition. In the latter instance, Soper uses the example of the 'Sun God' painted on the soffit of the 38-meter Buddha where the secondary divinities can be understood as surrounding the large central deity. This is certainly the earliest example at Bāmiyān of adopting the maṇḍala-like principle to the curved and oblong space of the soffit of the colossal niches. All the later compositions that decorate all the other colossal niches adapt a solution closer to the concentric maṇḍala scheme. The central deity is isolated at the center of the soffit and the other Buddhas are perpendicular to him (as they are in the concentric maṇḍala scheme), thus they can be understood as emanating from the central deity.

⁶ A. Soper, 'The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia,' pp. 225-248.

A chronological development of the maṇḍala-like scheme can be identified in the art of the Hindu Kush. The composition of the standing Buddhas surrounding the seated Buddha on the ceiling of a cave at Folādi (Fig. 25) is similar to the composition decorating the dome of Cave C, Bāmiyān, but at Bāmiyān a lotus occupies the center. The composition in Cave C (Fig. 27) is similar to the one in Kucha (Fig. 28). Stylistic evidence⁷ indicates that the maṇḍala-like composition in Folādi is later than the one in Kucha. The central Buddha in Folādi has replaced the lotus of the earlier compositions where the lotus occupied the position of the central Buddha from which the surrounding Buddhas emanate. The composition in Folādi may also be a maṇḍala. It is useful to compare the Bāmiyān maṇḍalas to a proto-maṇḍala, such as the one from the *MMK* (Fig. 29). It is also interesting to note the remains of another variant of the maṇḍala-like composition which decorated the dome of C2 (Fig. 27).

There is a lack of iconographic clarity at Bāmiyān, which suggests that the iconography is still in its formative stage. In comparing the Bāmiyān maṇḍala to the proto-maṇḍala from the *MMK*, we can recognize a different phase of development. In the diagram from the *MMK* there is no single integrating image at the center, while at the periphery there is an assortment of Brahmanical deities. On the whole, there is little sense of integration in the *MMK* maṇḍala. In the maṇḍala at Bāmiyān, on the contrary, the central figure is present and the emanating figures are all recognizably Buddhist (with the possible exception of the unidentified figures in the medallions on the east wall, 55-meter niche (See Fig. 31).

Still, the identification of the diagrams at Bāmiyān as maṇḍalas should be considered hypothetical until the deities in the diagrams at the center and peripheries are identified. The resolution of this question depends not only on a study of contemporary art and literature, but on an understanding of the dynamics of Vajrayāna Buddhist iconography.

Paradise Scenes

In the Hindu Kush, the maṇḍala-like compositions on the ceiling unified the painted and sculptured Buddhas along the walls that were placed against painted backgrounds; together, the pictorial environments of the walls and ceilings created a symbolic universe. Functionally, although not compositionally, this type of symbolic space might be compared to the slightly later caves at Tun-huang dating from the eighth century, which were decorated with paradise scenes. There may have been paradise scenes in the contemporaneous caves at Bāmiyān. Perhaps such scenes were painted in Caves N, F, and Jd⁸. These scenes are too fragmentary for analysis. It is interesting to note, however, that the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future residing in the Tuṣita Heaven, which is represented in the soffit of the niches and several cupolas in the Hindu Kush, is clearly a synoptic extract of the scene of Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven found earlier in Kizil.

⁷ See chapter VI of this study.

⁸ See *Descriptive Catalogue* for these fragmentary paintings.

The Spiritual Career of Śākyamuni

The intention of the artistic configurations at Bāmiyān can be deduced by reference to contemporary literary and artistic documents. While visual sources for the art of the Hindu Kush occur in the Buddhist art of Afghanistan and the adjacent areas, it is the literary sources that reveal the originality and importance of the site.

In the seventh century Bāmiyān appears to have been the main center of the Lokottaravādin, a subsect of the Mahāsāṃghika. The Mahāsāṃghika were also identified in the Hindu Kush to the east of Bāmiyān at Andārab. The Buddhists in the surrounding areas, to the south and east of the Hindu Kush⁹, were for the most part associated with Mahāyāna practices. The Mahāsāṃghika and their relation to trends in Buddhist thought and practice during the sixth through eighth centuries A.D. have been discussed at length in chapter IV. As noted above, Bareau has already proposed that the colossal Buddhas of Bāmiyān, a principal site of the Lokottaravādin, reflect the ideas of this school. It is reasonable to assume that the *Mahāvastu*, their canonical text, had an impact on the development of the visual arts. This is not to say that other texts did not also influence the ideas and art of the Lokottaravādin. On the contrary, as described above, one might imagine a rather wide locus of interaction and influence. The *Mahāvastu* is, however, the single most important documentation of Lokottaravādin thought and thus can serve as an indication of the underlying logic and intention of the art, although in some cases another literary source, or a part thereof, might actually have inspired a particular representation.

In this study I shall suggest that all of the distinguishing iconographic features of the painting, like the colossal sculptures of the Hindu Kush, can be associated with Lokottaravādin ideas as they are expressed in the latest sections of the *Mahāvastu*. We shall further demonstrate how these ideas related to contemporaneous Buddhist art and thought as found in other texts and the art of the surrounding areas.

Most of this discussion will center on the spiritual career of Śākyamuni, the main theme of the art of Bāmiyān. This theme is most succinctly expressed in the prologue and first part of the *Mahāvastu*, which is also the latest section of the extant text. The progress of Śākyamuni to enlightenment is seen in stages called bhūmis, which are expressed as paradigms of moral and spiritual progress culminating in Buddhahood.

The Ten Bhūmis of the *Mahāvastu* are explained in detail in chapter IV. Here I would like to call attention to the Bodhisattva ideal as it appears in the *Mahāvastu* and might have been presented to the layman. The subject exists in a more developed form in several Mahāyāna texts where generally the concept of virtue or pāramitā is demonstrated by having the Bodhisattva represent one of the virtues or pāramitās in each stage or bhūmi. The power and virtue of the Bodhisattva thus gradually increases until he becomes a Buddha.

The Nikāya Buddhists presented the conceptions of the Bodhisattva ideal and the pāramitās in the *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* tales. These tales, which presented the manner in which Śākyamuni developed moral virtues in his previous lives and accumulated the merit that eventually led to his becoming a Buddha served as moral lessons for the laity¹⁰. The same function is served by the exposition of the

⁹ Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques*, p. 304.

¹⁰ N. Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnayāna*, pp. 36 ff.

Ten Bhūmis in, for example, the *Mahāvastu* and *Daśabhūmikasūtra*. The close relationship of the concept of the bhūmis and the *Jātakas* is explicitly pointed out in the *Mahāvastu*¹¹.

The morality of sacrifice in order to obtain Buddhahood is a popular theme at Buddhist pilgrimage sites. The didactic message was conveyed through representations of pictorial scenes from the life or *Jātaka* or *Avadāna* tales. The images were located where the laity could see them when worshipping at the site, such as around the main stūpa. The widespread interest in the didactic function of such tales is found at such diverse sites as the great stūpa of Borobudur (Indonesia) and the Pin-yang cave at Lung-mên (China).

In the Pin-yang cave are good examples of this phenomenon. The *Sudhana-jātaka* and *Mahāsattva-jātaka* both represent the moral of sacrifice in order to obtain enlightenment. The *Sudhana-jātaka* is particularly interesting since it involves not only personal salvation, but the enlightenment of other sentient beings. The *jātaka* relates that Sudhana, by virtue of his acts of charity and compassion, regained his realm and his subjects enjoyed peace and prosperity. After his death he was reborn in the Tuṣita Heaven and eventually came to earth as Śākyamuni.

It may never be possible to claim for Bāmiyān, as for Borobudur, that one text had 'fundamental importance to those who participated in the planning of the monument'¹². However, we can at least say that the *Mahāvastu* provides a literary parallel to the visual themes at Bāmiyān. It has been suggested that the different terraces of the great stūpa of Borobudur symbolize the ten steps (bhūmis) toward Buddhahood¹³. Although this hypothesis has not been proven, it is at least clear that a series of the reliefs on the stūpa represent the pilgrimage of Sudhana discussed in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* which, like the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*, describes the progression toward enlightenment. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* contains a section describing how the floors of a palace symbolize the ten Bodhisattva stages. Thus, the concept of an architectural monument reflecting the ten Bodhisattva stages was familiar in Central Asia where the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, as part of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, was a popular text. Functionally, all these narratives serve the same purpose: to instruct the Buddhist believer on the path toward enlightenment.

The Buddha-to-Be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven

The importance of the spiritual career of Śākyamuni in the art of the Hindu Kush can best be understood through an examination of the unique iconographic type which I have identified as the image of the abhiṣeka of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven. This iconographic type has not previously been identified in Buddhist art. This image occurs often in the art of the Hindu Kush and greater Kashmir, but its use elsewhere is limited both geographically and temporally. We cannot identify when or where this image first originated. For our purposes it is sufficient to recognize its importance for the Buddhist sites in the Hindu Kush. Royal symbolism, local artistic tradition, and the doctrine of the Lokotaravādin, which emphasizes the transcendent nature of Śākyamuni, were all important factors in formulating this image.

Since extensive damage often makes the photographs that are included here

¹¹ *Daśabhūmikasūtra et Bodhisattvabhūmi*, pp. xvi-xx.

¹² J. Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana*, p. 160.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-163.

difficult to read, I will give a complete description of each example:

(1) Bāmiyān, 38-meter Buddha niche (Figs. 4, 32).

Painting in niche; blue, three-pointed cape with gold fringe and gold medallions over brown monastic gown; fan-shaped crown with four superimposed parts in gold, white, brown, gold, and side rosettes with two short streamers; gold crescents with brown pattern spring from both shoulders; long white streamers float from shoulders; gold torque and longer white necklace; two gold medallions at each shoulder; white scarf held in both hands, left hand at waist level, right hand above in vitarkamudrā.

(2) Bāmiyān, 38-meter Buddha niche (Figs. 4, 32).

Painting in niche; blue, three-pointed cape with gold fringe over brown monastic gown; crown consists of pearl band, a pair of wings enclosing a crescent with a ball in the center; side rosettes with short streamers; gold torque and longer white necklace; gold medallions edged in pearls on shoulders; pairs of short blue streamers and long white streamers float from shoulders; left hand holds a footed cup with streamers attached, right hand in vitarkamudrā.

(3) Bāmiyān, Cave S (Fig. 33).

Painting in niche; cape over red monastic gown; top half of body destroyed; high black rectangular crown set on broad white band, white rosettes at side of crown with long white streamers; hands destroyed.

(4) Bāmiyān, Niche 'i', (Fig. 34).

Painting in niche; white, three-pointed cape with red fringe and green border over red monastic gown; cape has red fringe pattern at shoulders, three large medallions at each shoulder and center; white shoulder effulgences like flames; red, five-part crown with short white streamers; black pātra in palm of left hand, right hand in vitarkamudrā.

(5) Bāmiyān, 55-meter Buddha niche (Figs. 35, 36).

Painting in niche; blue cape with jewels and long gold fringe over brown monastic gown; two large medallions on breast of cape are gold-rimmed with black and gray-rimmed with white (probably represent sun and moon); crescents perhaps at shoulders (unclear); white scarf with floral pattern hangs across chest and flows over shoulders; gold torque and long white pearl necklace; crown consists of three gold crescents each enclosing a white olive-shaped jewel, crescents and jewel topped with pearls, side rosettes with long white streamers; black pātra held in palm of left hand, right hand in vitarkamudrā.

(6) Folādi, Cave E (Fig. 107).

Painting in center of dome; figure almost completely destroyed; green cape with black fringe over a red monastic gown; crown with short flying streamers; long scarves float down along shoulders; variant of dhyānamudrā, right hand over left.

(7) Fondukistān, Niche D (Fig. 37).

Clay sculpture of which only torso and head remain; three-pointed jewelled cape with fringe over monastic gown; wide necklace; face restored; back of niche where figure was placed destroyed; hence it is not possible to determine if figure had shoulder effulgences, streamers, or crown.

A recent Japanese publication allows us to add two more Buddhas from Bāmiyān to this typology. I have not seen these images but from the sketches¹⁴ they coincide with the typology we had earlier established.

¹⁴ A. Miyaji, 'Lineage and Dating of the Bejewelled Buddha of Bāmiyān,' p. 14.

(8) From complex XII.

The seated figure wears a three-pointed cape apparently similar to that worn by the jewelled Buddhas in the 38-meter Buddha niche paintings; likewise the flying scarves from the shoulder; crown is destroyed; right hand in vitarkamudrā, left in lap, may hold a bowl.

(9) Complex E.

The only standing jewelled Buddha in the Hindu Kush. From the sketch wears a jewelled cape but straight edged as in 55-meter Buddha niche painting. Triple crescent crown similar also to jewelled Buddha in 55-meter Buddha niche painting. Right hand in vitarkamudrā, left holds bowl with streamers.

All these figures share the same iconographic characteristics and are all represented in the hieratic mode. To summarize: all the figures save one sit in padmāsana on lotuses with down-turned petals. They wear monastic robes covering both shoulders, the folds of which fall across the chest along a median line. They wear three-pointed jewelled and fringed capes (except the straight-edged jewelled cape), crowns with floating streamers, necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. They almost all have shoulder effulgences and the majority of the figures also have floating scarves and a pair of large medallions on the upper part of their capes; most hold pātras or bowls and are, with one possible exception, in vitarkamudrā.

This image is distinguished from other examples of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven by the cape and shoulder effulgences. These attributes may be only regional stylistic variants, however, they may also have a symbolic function. Reference to the *Mahāvastu* allows us to suggest that this image represents the completion of the tenth bhūmi in the Tuṣita Heaven when the Buddha-to-be — wearing the raiments of a king — is consecrated by divine light. Other variants such as the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni preaching in the Tuṣita Heaven, would follow this in the pictorial narrative. All canonical traditions agree that it is from the Tuṣita Heaven that all Buddhas are reborn for the last time.

The concluding section of the Ten Bhūmis in the *Mahāvastu* (see chapter IV) explains that the Buddha grants a gift of miraculous apparitions in order to teach mankind¹⁵. In these apparitions, he appears in the royal raiment of a king. Several quotations from the *Mahāvastu* are of interest here. 'Then the Supreme of Men, in the guise of a king, and hovering in the air, spoke these words of wisdom [...]'¹⁶ 'At that time there appeared in yet another of his existences, the noble, the mighty and glorious Lord, arrayed in rich garments and jewels'¹⁷. 'O mighty being, great in majesty, splendour, knowledge and power, reveal truly who thou art, we pray thee. I, born of a royal race, established as king of dharma, am the refuge of all living things. Men know that I am Buddha'¹⁸.

Certain of the Lokottaravādin theories which have influenced the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush can be briefly summarized: the culmination of the Bodhisattva's journey to Buddhahood occurs in the tenth bhūmi when he is born into the Tuṣita Heaven¹⁹. It is here that he receives the abhiṣeka as a fully enlightened Buddha,

¹⁵ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I, p. 140.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

and it is from the Tuṣita Heaven that he descends to earth for the last time in order to teach gods and men. For this purpose, he takes on the appearance and experiences the suffering of a man; the text states, however, that he had already attained Buddhahood. When a Buddha is born from the side of his mother, she is uninjured, for he has a mind-formed body. He is, however, not really born from a mother and father at all, but arises as an apparitional being by the force of his own qualities²⁰. This description contrasts with the other important traditions in Buddhism that do not emphasize the mind-formed (*manomaya*) body of Śākyamuni during his last rebirth. According to some traditions, the Bodhisattva's consecration as a fully enlightened Buddha occurred in Bodh-gayā under the Bodhi tree.

The Visual Source

The iconography of the abhiṣeka of Śākyamuni is a variant of the representations of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven which can be identified in Indian art. It is not until the post-Gupta period, however, that I am able to identify images specifically representing the abhiṣeka of the future Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven. The distinctive iconographic features of this latter type — the crown, the three-pointed cape with jewels and fringe, the shoulder effulgences, and pātra — are only found in the images from the Hindu Kush listed above and, without the pātra, on a group of sculptures from greater Kashmir. The Hindu Kush examples date from the seventh to ninth centuries A.D.; the examples from greater Kashmir date from the eighth to the tenth centuries A.D. The one Central Asian example, a silk painting from Tun-huang, belongs to the later group. Related to the group of so-called 'Kashmiri' sculptures are two brahmanical deities that have at least the three-pointed cape. One is a Sūrya which is datable to the sixth century A.D. and the other is a Viṣṇu datable to the eighth century A.D.

The popularity of the jewelled Buddha in the post-Gupta art of India and Central Asia can be deduced from contemporary texts and a few rare paintings. Both these sources depict large-sized icons made of different materials, stone, clay, or wood, to which the crown, jewels, and expensive materials were added. This tradition of dressing the image in expensive garments continues today. For example, elaborately embroidered three-pointed capes still frequently adorn the main image worshipped in Himalayan Buddhist sanctuaries.

Important literary evidence is offered by Hsüan-tsang who described jewelled Buddhas in Khotan, Kucha, Bodhgayā, and Bāmiyān, to name just a few examples. With regard to Kucha, he wrote, 'In all the convents there are highly adorned images of Buddha, decorated with precious substances and covered with silken stuffs'²¹. The painting from Tun-huang which will be discussed below testifies that the 'Famous Images' from Khotan were also jewelled (Fig. 43). These images usually represented the historical Buddha.

Despite the later popularity of the jewelled Buddha image, the genesis of this figure is difficult to identify. Only one example is known to me in pre-Gupta art where Śākyamuni wears a sort of jewelled turban, a wide necklace, and a monastic gown, he sits padmāsana in dhyānamudrā on a lotus; this occurs on a panel from the Sikri Stūpa (Fig. 24). Foucher identified this image as the Buddha-to-be in the

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 173-174.

²¹ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. I, p. 22.

Tuṣita Heaven. The narrative context provides the identification of Śākyamuni, as the subject of all the panels is Śākyamuni. The Sikri panels do not have an obvious chronological order. Two panels before the scene in the Tuṣita Heaven represents the first meditation. In the latter scene, the Bodhisattva wears Bodhisattva dress; in the Tuṣita Heaven he wears the monastic robe associated with a Buddha. There is an analogous scene from Amarāvātī identified by Foucher as the Bodhisattva teaching in the Tuṣita Heaven. There the figure wears Bodhisattva dress and is seated in padmāsana on a throne. He is performing the vitarkamudrā. The next scene shows the descent of Śākyamuni from the Tuṣita Heaven in the guise of an elephant, on route to entering his mother's side, prior to being reborn as Śākyamuni²².

Also to be identified as a Buddha-to-be being crowned in the Tuṣita Heaven is the Gupta period sculpture on the façade in Kārlī where the Buddha sits pralambapadāsana on a throne supported on a lotus, the stem of which is held by a pair of nāgas, and performs the vitarkamudrā. A crown is suspended over the Buddha's head²³. In this case, however, there is no context to suggest if this figure is Maitreya or Śākyamuni.

A group of statues attributable to the greater Kashmiri cultural sphere, and previously identified as Śākyamuni, can now be identified as the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven. The identification of Śākyamuni, rather than the Buddha-to-be Maitreya who also resides in the Tuṣita Heaven, is provided by the context of the images in the Hindu Kush and India as noted above.

A brass sculpture datable to the eighth century A.D., now in the John D. Rockefeller 3rd collection, relates most clearly to the Hindu Kush examples of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven (Fig. 38). The axis of the composition is a crowned Śākyamuni seated on a lotus supported by nāga kings emerging from the water. The jewelled and fringed three-pointed cape and shoulder effulgences distinguish this image and relate it to the Hindu Kush examples. Śākyamuni also wears a five-pointed crown with side rosettes and long flowing streamers, long earrings, necklace and bracelets, and he executes the dharmacakramudrā. Two smaller lotuses spring from the main stem; they each support a tall stūpa. The drum of each stūpa is adorned by Buddhas seated under an arch crowned with crescents and floating streamers. On the base are male and female donors who wear Central Asian dress. The male carries a wreath; the female, an incense burner. The inscription gives the names of the donors as Śaṅkarasena and Devaśrīya. The stūpas resemble the type most common in Hindu Kush paintings. The arch that encloses the Buddha figures, is crowned with a crescent and floating streamers that also decorate the stūpas. This motif is found in the art of the Hindu Kush. Some of the donor figures in the 55-meter Buddha niche wear the same costume as the male donor in the sculpture. The female donors in the 38-meter Buddha niche wear capes like that worn by the female donor.

The Rockefeller sculpture is the most complete iconographic representation of the theme of the abhiṣeka of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven (Fig. 38). The central group resembles the original sculptural ensemble at Fon-

²² These two images were identified by Foucher in *L'Art Gréco-bouddhique*, vol. I, figs. 145, 146.

²³ Kārlī, façade, see pl. 88b in Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*. It is frequently difficult to decide between Śākyamuni and Maitreya. In the Hindu Kush the context suggests the identification.

²⁴ Klimburg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, p. 9.

dukistān, Niche D²⁵. In the paintings from Bāmiyān and Folādi, the jewelled Śākyamuni is represented alone, without the additional pictorial details. The Hindu Kush images can be seen as a reduced image of the more complete representation depicted by the Rockefeller sculpture. The isolation of the image from its narrative and pictorial context is characteristic of the art of the Hindu Kush.

The following is a list of some sculptures which can be attributed to greater Kashmir and which have the three-pointed crown, cape and shoulder effulgences:

1. Śākyamuni, eighth century, height 13 1/4 inches. John D. Rockefeller III Collection (Fig. 38).
2. Śākyamuni, ninth to tenth centuries, height 7 1/4 inches. Esworth Collection (Fig. 39).
3. Śākyamuni, eighth to ninth centuries, height 20 inches. Heller Collection²⁶.
4. Śākyamuni, ninth to tenth centuries, height 6 inches. Milliken Collection²⁷.
5. Śākyamuni, eighth to ninth centuries, height 20 1/2 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 40).
6. Śākyamuni, Hindu Kush or Swat, height and location unknown, last seen in Kabul²⁸.
7. Śākyamuni, early eighth century, stone, life-size, Śri Pratap Singh Museum, Śrinagar; originally from the Caṅkuna Stūpa, Parihāspura²⁹ (Fig. 41).

There is only one painted image that may be added to this list, although the style of the attributes is somewhat different: the seated figure in the upper left-hand corner of the Tun-huang 'Iconographical Painting' in the National Museum, New Delhi. This is also the only example outside the Hindu Kush that is still part of an iconographic configuration (Fig. 43). Soper associated the figures in the Tun-huang painting with the series of 'Famous Images' known in the Khotanese tradition³⁰. The seated figure in the top right corner was not identified by Soper. Stein describes the figure thus: 'His robe is like that of a Buddha and red. Two white crescents are shown within the nimbus, which, like the vesika, is flame-edged'³¹. The Buddha also has shoulder effulgences and wears a large scalloped and fringed cape considered a transformation of the 'Kashmiri chasuble'³². Stein states that an inscription originally associated with this image was later incorrectly mounted at the bottom of the painting. Raphael Petrucci, who read the inscription when the painting was opened, reports that the inscription mentions 'as the original, a silver image preserved in the Kingdom of Kapiśa'³³.

In Hsüan-tsang's description of Kapiśa he states that there was a life-size silver image of the Buddha. This inscription could refer to such an image. The similarity of the iconographic type to the Hindu Kush jewelled Buddha may be explained by the continuation of a regional tradition; however, this explanation would be difficult

²⁵ See Descriptive Catalogue for a reconstruction of Niche D, Fondukistān.

²⁶ Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, pl. 36. This āsana may indicate Maitreya.

²⁷ S. Lee, 'Clothed in the Sun: A Buddha and a Sūrya from Kashmir,' fig. 18.

²⁸ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān, Report of Survey, 1969*, p. 35.

²⁹ Neither precise dates nor exact provenance can be proposed for the metal sculptures. The standing stone sculpture from Parihāspura, datable to the second quarter of the eighth century, was found at the stūpa of Caṅkuna, who was the Turkic minister of Lalitāditya. There is a second statue from Parihāspura which is identical to this; only the cape and shoulder effulgences are absent. These two iconographic attributes appear, therefore, to be connected and to have a symbolic meaning.

³⁰ A. Soper, 'Representations of Famous Images at Tun-huang,' pp. 349-364.

³¹ A. Stein, *The Thousand Buddhas*, p. 27.

³² W.K. Ho, 'Notes on Chinese Sculpture from Northern Ch'i to Sui, Part I,' pp. 25, 38, fn. 70. He notes that the similar image in the opposite corner is identified as Gautama at Bodhgayā, and indicates that the one we are discussing might be the Baghai image from Kashmir. He was not aware of the inscription (p. 25).

³³ Stein, *The Thousand Buddhas*, p. 27.

to reconcile with Soper's identification of the painting as representing the 'Famous Images' of Khotan.

Through the T'ang period, the term used for the areas of Kashmir and Kapiśa was the same. The Chinese word Kipin was used for both places, so that, out of context, it is difficult to know which was intended³⁴. If Soper's interpretation of the painting is correct, then Kashmir is implied and Ho's interpretation may be correct. In that case it is possible that this figure, as one of the Khotanese 'Famous Images', represents the seated, crowned Buddha at Baghai in Khotan, which originally came from Kashmir. A Kashmiri origin would explain the remarkable iconographic similarity between the Tun-huang painted image and the Kashmiri sculptures listed above.

In the early seventh century, Hsüan-tsang saw the Baghai statue in Khotan and recorded its legend³⁵. The Khotanese image cannot, therefore, be later than the beginning of the seventh century. The earliest images which wear the 'Kashmiri chasuble'³⁶ are datable to the sixth century, Kashmir. The scale of the image, however also suggests an identification of this image as the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven. This hypothesis would not conflict with the identification of the other figures of the same size in the painting, most of which represent important moments in Śākyamuni's career³⁷.

How can one interpret the differences between the figures in the upper left and right of the painting? A possible explanation is that the two images follow a chronological sequence. The image to the right is the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, distinguished by his crown, shoulder effulgences, and the 'Kashmiri chasuble,' while to the left is Śākyamuni during his last earthly sojourn at Bodhgayā when he achieved enlightenment.

It is not possible to verify this suggestion. Rather one needs to look for other pairs of seated Buddha figures with these same iconographic characteristics.

The Vitarkamudrā

A distinctive feature of the Hindu Kush images, although occasionally found in greater Kashmir as well, is the mudrā. Most of the images hold a bowl (all but

³⁴ Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, vol. I, pp. 259-260.

³⁵ Hiuen Tsiang, *Sī-yu-ki*, vol. II, pp. 314-315.

³⁶ The earliest example of this cape is on a bronze Sūrya in the National Museum, New Delhi, ca. sixth century; also dating to this period is the earliest extant Sūrya image at Martand, which also wears this cape. A donor figure in a sculptural group from Gandhāra wears the earliest variant of this garment (J. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans*, pl. 62), which is a more simple cape than the one discussed here. The Gandhāran cape, however, is not a ceremonial type as is this one worn by the Buddhas. The donor's cape lacks jewels and fringe. I have elsewhere suggested that this figure can be identified as a Kashmiri nobleman (Klimburg-Salter, 'Vaiśravaṇa in Northwest India').

³⁷ Soper, 'Representations of Famous Images.' As Soper noticed, the fragments of the painting have been so badly rearranged and mounted that one cannot come to conclusions for the painting as a whole. It is clear, however, that certain of these images are the same size and it is perhaps reasonable to assume some relationship between them. Those which are complete enough to have been identified are from the top left: Śākyamuni at Bodhgayā, Śākyamuni and the Miracle of Śrāvastī or the Buddha from Kauśāmbi (Ibid., p. 362), the shadow image of Chang-yeh, the Sermon in the Deer Park, Avalokiteśvara at Mt. Potalaka (an identification I find not totally convincing), and Śākyamuni at Rājagṛha. The British Museum fragments were remounted so that they could be exhibited together for the first time with the more substantial part of the painting from the National Museum New Delhi; see Whitfield in Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, 1982, p. 126; Bhattacharya, *ibid.*, p. 129.

the paintings in the 38-meter Buddha niche — where it is a footed cup); the shape is that of the begging bowl (pātra). The pātra is associated with Śākyamuni.

The images whose right hand holds the bowl, have the left hand in vitarkamudrā. This mudrā (argumentation) is used by both Śākyamuni and Maitreya. From the sixth century in Central Asian art it is particularly associated with the Buddha-to-be in the Tuṣita Heaven. The other figure in the art of the Hindu Kush that is represented in this mudrā can be identified as Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven. A more complete discussion of this figure is found below.

Both the bowl and the vitarkamudrā are well known features of Śākyamuni in certain contexts. The other attributes of the image are not normally associated with the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven. As already noted this particular conjunction of symbolic features forming this iconographic type occurs only within a restricted historical and geographical context; it follows then that they might have had their source in regional traditions.

The Triple-Crescent Crown

Despite a careful distinction between crown types in the art of the Hindu Kush, these crown types cannot be connected in a logical way to a particular dynasty. There are four crown types in different chronological phases in the Hindu Kush. The two crown types that appear in the earliest stylistic phase at Bāmiyān can both be related to examples of enthroned kings on silver plates from ancient Khorasan (Fig. 44)³⁸. Stylistic analysis also establishes relationships between this phase of Hindu Kush painting and Central Asian, again particularly Sogdian art. These few examples, however, are not sufficient to provide a firm chronological framework. The third crown type, the five-pointed crown, appears in the second stylistic phase. This crown also appears on example 2 of the Kashmiri style sculptures. It is used throughout Buddhist art and cannot, therefore, provide chronological information. The fourth type is a simplified version of the Kashmiri crown (three crescents of equal size, each filled with a rosette and decorated with pearls, with side rosettes attached to the headband) and the most common of the four crown types found on Śākyamuni figures in the art of the Hindu Kush. It is not worn by any of the donor figures.

This last type of crown occurs in three of four stylistic phases at Bāmiyān: on the figures in the 55-meter Buddha niche and in Cave N, on the Vaiśravaṇa at Fondukistān³⁹, and on the 'Hunter King' at Kakrak. Also it symbolically crowns the Buddhas in the niches in Cave C2, Bāmiyān (Fig. 45), where the three crescents appear above the umbrella intended to crown the now missing sculpture of the Buddha.

The earliest example of this triple-crescent crown known to me in the Buddhist art of the region occurs in a stucco Buddha head from Haḍḍa excavated by Barthoux and now in the Musée Guimet. The sculptures from this dig are difficult to date but the head would not appear to be later than the fifth century A.D.

³⁸ The iconographic and stylistic similarity with the silver plates attributed to Khorasan, eighth-ninth centuries A.D., can only be explained by a common reference point. The capes worn by the figures in the plates illustrated are the only examples of this type and appear to be copied from a three-pointed cape. The earlier Hindu Kush type may have been the original. There is also a notable relationship between the princes on these two bowls and the enthroned Islamic prince type. In addition, please refer to note 36.

³⁹ Klimburg-Salter, 'Vaiśravaṇa in Northwest India.'

The triple-crescent crown, which appears on both Brahmanical and Buddhist deities in Kashmir from the eighth to the tenth centuries, is also worn by King Avāntivārman in a relief depicting a coronation in the Avāntivārman temple at Avāntipur⁴⁰. Variants of this crown appear in the art of Kabul, Gandhāra, Swat, Gilgit, and greater Kashmir from the seventh to tenth centuries. It is relatively rare elsewhere. There is also one example in a painting from Khotan, attributed to ca. A.D. 700, now in the National Museum of New Delhi (Fig. 10).

Unfortunately concordance with numismatic evidence is still unclear. The historical prototype for this crown might be derived from north India in the sixth century. Göbl sees evidence for this in a variant of this crown (triple crescents, each with a trident in the center) on a gem attributed to India at the end of the sixth century⁴¹. According to Göbl, the first numismatic evidence is from coins of the Alxon Naraṇa-Narendra and is dated by him ca. 580-590⁴². The first frontal representation of the crown, as it appears in the art of the Hindu Kush (e.g. Bāmiyān Cave K), is dated by Göbl to ca. A.D. 720⁴³. This crown type was used by a political entity which Göbl identified in Kapiśa-Kabul-Gandhāra from ca. A.D. 560 to ca. A.D. 720.

Thus the numismatic evidence according to Göbl indicates that the triple-crescent crown originated in north India no later than the sixth century with the so-called 'Indian Huns,' travelled to Afghanistan in the sixth to seventh centuries, was particularly prominent in the Kapiśa-Kabul-Gandhāra area, and returned to northwest India and Kashmir in the eighth century. Due to its long history, it is possible that the simplest crown type depicted in the art of the Hindu Kush became symbolic of a political group rather than indicative of a particular king.

The Three-Pointed Cape

The earliest known examples of the three-pointed cape with jewels and fringe (the form in which it appears in the Hindu Kush) are on a bronze statue of Sūrya, attributed to the sixth century, which is in the National Museum in New Delhi⁴⁴. The cape is worn over a well-known type of Central Asian costume, a long coat over high soft boots, with a dagger suspended horizontally from the belt. This cape is also found on stucco Buddhas from Taxila and an important standing Buddha from Tapa Sardār who is in abhayamudrā and holds a pātra⁴⁵.

It should be noted that a few of the later metal sculptures show a fourth point of the cape on the back but many do not. Since we are dealing mainly with painting and there is no implication of a fourth point we feel a nomenclature reflecting the visual evidence, i.e. 'three-pointed cape' is most prudent.

It seems unquestionable that this [cape] must have been a particular jacket design, fashionable in Central Asia at this period [sixth century] and was applied to the Buddha in certain instances [...]

⁴⁰ This scene can be identified as a coronation and is located on the left side of the entrance to the temple.

⁴¹ Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien* (G57). Vol. I: 252-253.

⁴² Ibid., (K35, Em. 147-151). Vol. I: 113-115; II: 75.

⁴³ In Göbl's typology, K46, also II: 50 passim and pp. 71-89.

⁴⁴ Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, p. 80.

⁴⁵ Taddei and Verardi, 'Second Preliminary Report,' pp. 47-55 and fig. 11. As this figure does not have a crown and shoulder effulgences, we do not include it in our typology.

Thus, whatever symbolical meaning it may have acquired later, originally it must have been a piece of garment worn by the royalty, and hence transferred to both the regal Buddha and Sūrya⁴⁶.

There are no representations of royal coronation rites in Afghanistan. It can be inferred, however, from the custom in Kashmir of adorning kings and gods in the same attire⁴⁷, that royal coronation robes may have been used to symbolize the abhiṣeka (coronation) of Śākyamuni. This hypothesis would explain the fact that the three-pointed jewelled and fringed cape appears only in this particular context. The limited geographic and temporal range of this iconographic type is the same as that of the triple-crescent crown. This coincidence might be explained by the fact that both the cape and the crown were associated with a specific dynasty or dynasties.

Tibetan examples of this cape, resembling the 'Kashmiri chasuble' in the Tun-huang iconographical painting, are associated with royal images. Modern cloth capes adorn the images of king Sroṅ-brtsan-sgam-po (A.D. 649) and his wives in the Jokhang and the Potala in Lhasa. These statues represent the divinized royal family. An early Tibetan text states that after Sroṅ-brtsan-sgam-po died 'In the sight of palace officials, he disappeared into a sacred statue'⁴⁸. A gold scalloped edge is embroidered on the cape or tailored into it. The date of these statues is unknown, although it is variously claimed that they were supernaturally created or date to about the eighth century. Of course, it is impossible to say when the capes became associated with the sculptures. Tucci, while not dating the Potala statues, connects them to the Kashmiri artistic traditions of the eighth century, with influences from the Hindu Śāhi and also earlier Gandhāran art⁴⁹.

The symbolic function of the cape can be more clearly understood from the study of its contemporary uses in Tibetan Buddhist art and ritual. In this context, the cape is usually found in rituals concerned with divinized personages or the Five Tathāgatas (Jinas). The capes and crowns are not only worn by images but also by priests, lamas, when they ritually identify with, and symbolically represent, the deities⁵⁰, often within a maṇḍala. In the Himalayas a silk three-pointed cape is sometimes used to clothe icons of Śākyamuni or Maitreya. It is to such additional adornment that Hsüan-tsang obviously refers when he writes of images dressed in fine materials and jewels.

Shoulder Effulgences

Regional tradition was also the source for the forms of the shoulder effulgences which represented two themes expressed in the text: the supernatural attributes of the Buddha and the consecration by divine light that occurred during the abhiṣeka. The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* notes that Śākyamuni was sprinkled with light during his consecration in the tenth bhūmi. The use of shoulder flames to indicate supernatural glory was well known in the art of eastern Afghanistan. The shoulder flames

⁴⁶ Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Until the historiography of the pre-Islamic period of the Hindu Kush, Kashmir, and adjacent areas is clarified, it is not possible to suggest the dynasty which first may have used this coronation cape.

⁴⁸ D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Tucci, *Transhimalaya*, p. 80.

⁵⁰ D. Lauf, *Tibetan Sacred Art*, pl. 50. This photograph shows dGe-lugs-pa lamas wearing the cape and crown when symbolically representing the Five Tathāgatas.

occur on a variety of images over a long period of time, beginning with the representation of Kaniška with flaming shoulders on his coins⁵¹.

In Kashmir the shoulder flames are replaced by the crescent and rosette, or ball, which symbolize the sun and moon. This motif is also popular in Central Asia and Tibet. The sun and moon symbols placed on the shoulders of the Buddha emphasize his nature as the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. The sun and moon are also represented by discs in the art of Central Asia. It is in this fashion that they adorn the jewelled cape of the Śākyamuni painted in the 55-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 36). Similar discs appear on the chest of some Central Asian examples of Vaiśravaṇa. In this context they are symbols of sacred kingship: '*the sun and moon displayed on the chest of the god and mentioned in the Tibetan texts are common signs of a divine king*'⁵².

Thus, the analysis of the image of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven demonstrates that it was meant to symbolize the completion of the tenth bhūmi and thus the lesson represented by the Bodhisattva's career. The visual image as the literary image symbolized the last phase of the Bodhisattva's career as an abhiṣeka. Similar to the literary image, the visual image employed the royal symbols associated with the idea of a coronation — a royal (perhaps coronation) cape and a crown. It seems that these symbols were derived from the secular tradition of the mountainous region of northwest India current in the sixth century.

The exposition of the ten bhūmis serves as a moral example, as do the *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* tales. There are no pictorial scenes representing the latter texts in the Hindu Kush, where the didactic function of such scenes, so popular in earlier Buddhist art, is carried out by the image of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni; this image hovering in the Tuṣita Heaven emphasizes the transcendent rather than the historical nature of Śākyamuni.

The Abhiṣeka Ceremony and the Adaptation of Royal Symbolism

The analysis of the origin of the specific attributes of the image of the abhiṣeka of Śākyamuni demonstrates the symbolic process of adapting visual motifs used as royal symbols to religious images. The most important royal symbol in the context of this discussion is the ceremony of the abhiṣeka itself.

What was the abhiṣeka and its symbolic function during the period under consideration? Abhiṣeka is translated either as 'consecration' or as 'coronation' (from the Sanskrit *abhi*, 'upon, toward' and *sic*, 'to pour, sprinkle'). In the religious context of esoteric Buddhism, the abhiṣeka is the consecration of the initiate to future Buddhahood and the means by which the wisdom of the maṇḍala is revealed to the devotee. When the initiate enters the maṇḍala, he is within 'the sphere of the divinity with whom [he] identifies himself, thus exercising the power which pertains to the divinity'⁵³. This ceremony performs the function of an initiation rite.

The abhiṣeka or initiation ceremony in esoteric Buddhism derives from royal

⁵¹ Rosenfield, *Dynastic Art of the Kushans*, pp. 197-201; Soper, 'Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture.'

⁵² P. Granoff, 'Tobatsu Bishamon: Three Japanese Statues in the United States and an Outline of the Rise of this Cult in East Asia,' p. 165 (italics are mine). The painting at Bāmiyān was too eroded to clearly ascertain if the Śākyamuni had shoulder effulgences; if not, the symbolic function of the shoulder flames was served by the sun and moon symbols, as in the Kashmiri images.

⁵³ Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, p. 76.

coronation rites, and was 'used in such proto-Mahāyāna texts as the *Mahāvastu* to consecrate the historical Buddha's final birth and accession to his princely rank. The ceremony later came to symbolize the last stage in any man's path toward Enlightenment, and finally, in the context of Esoteric Buddhism, was connected with initiation into the secrets of the mandala'⁵⁴.

The consecration itself begins by the pupils paying their master royal honours; then, having made all preparations as for the consecration of universal sovereignty (*sarvarājyābhiṣeka*), they honour their master. They spread the great canopy, they set up flags and banners of victory, they hold a white umbrella over his head and wave white flywhisks.

With great ceremony they cause the conch-shells and great drums to make a joyous sound and they praise him with cries of victory, with auspicious verses, with verses of praise and good fortune which declare a conqueror. Then having bowed before the buddhas and bodhisattvas, they should say: 'O master, I wish to enter upon the performance of the mantra-practices of the buddhas and bodhisattvas; I wish to enter the secret circle of that release which transcends all that pertains to this world; I wish to attain buddhahood involving universal sovereignty in the dharma. In brief, may I be a Buddha'⁵⁵.

The form of the abhiṣeka ceremony was a logical development of the association between the Bodhisattva and the princely nature, and the Buddha and the Universal Sovereign (*cakravartin-rāja*). The symbolic function of the abhiṣeka as it appears in the *Mahāvastu* and the art of the Hindu Kush can be best understood by referring to other literary and artistic documents. The development of the form and function of the abhiṣeka can be traced from the *Mahāvastu* to the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (*MMK*) and finally to the later Tantric text, the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṅgraha-tantra* (*STTS*)⁵⁶. I have chosen here only representative texts to demonstrate a typological change.

In the *Mahāvastu* the notion and symbols of kingship (including the ceremony of the abhiṣeka) are clearly enunciated. In the *MMK* the discussions of the different types of religious consecration ceremonies are interspersed with references to ordinary regal consecrations. Snellgrove has already demonstrated the influence of the secular consecration rites on the esoteric religious rites⁵⁷. Eventually royal symbolism became so integrated into esoteric Buddhism that these symbols were no longer used in the same concrete form as found in the *Mahāvastu*. In the *STTS*, which follows the *MMK* in the development of esoteric Buddhist literature⁵⁸,

the followers of the Buddha were far beyond the stage of conscious adaptation of the symbols of sovereignty, for they [the symbols] had now become an accepted part of the tradition. From now on the central divinity resides of his own right in the temple-palace in the centre of the *maṇḍala* and he appears spontaneously wearing full royal regalia [...] the whole notion of a consecration was regal in origin, its significance had by now been almost entirely transformed and kingship or crown-princship is merely an associated idea⁵⁹.

The royal symbols are now given a specific religious meaning. An example is the crown placed on the initiate's head, which represented 'his empowerment by the five Buddhas into whose lineage he now enters'⁶⁰.

⁵⁴ Granoff, 'A Portable Buddhist Shrine From Central Asia,' p. 90.

⁵⁵ Snellgrove, 'The Notion of Divine Kingship in Tantric Buddhism,' p. 207.

⁵⁶ Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, pp. 57-58; he also proposes a fifth century date for the *MMK*. The *STTS* was composed later, probably about the seventh century 'Divine Kingship,' p. 118.

⁵⁷ Snellgrove, 'Divine Kingship.'

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 211-214.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 213-214.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 214. The five-part crown used in esoteric initiations may be related to the five-part

The relationship between the jewelled Śākyamuni who occupies the center of the maṇḍala and the initiate at the time of the abhiṣeka is described in the *MMK*. The general appearance of Śākyamuni at this time is similar to the jewelled Śākyamuni in the art of greater Kashmir and the Hindu Kush:

He has the color of saffron and is like the rising sun. He holds a great wheel which is turning. He is like a great king with his crown and his decorations, a great being who is crowned and adorned with all adornments. His lower garment is of fine cloth and his upper garment of cloth of various colors. He is bewreathed and handsome, adorned with strands and garlands. He smells a wreath of flowers held in the right hand. He smiles just slightly. He is strong and mighty. Fair he is and handsome, neither young nor old. In his left hand he holds the wheel, wreathed in blazing light which he is turning⁶¹.

This description may bring to mind the resplendent Vairocana. It is Śākyamuni, however, who occupies the central position in the *MMK* as in the *Mahāvastu* — not the historical Śākyamuni of the earlier texts, but the resplendent, transcendent Śākyamuni.

The symbolism and function of the abhiṣeka are directly connected to the function of the maṇḍala, for it is within the sacred area of the maṇḍala that the abhiṣeka, or initiation ceremony in esoteric Buddhism, occurs. Here the maṇḍala can be understood as both an altar, a sacred space, and a cosmic diagram.

Confirmation of the hypothesis that the jewelled Buddha in the art of the Hindu Kush represents the abhiṣeka of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni is found in the description of a Buddhist initiation rite (abhiṣeka) during which the initiate identifies himself with the jewelled Buddha — symbolizing that the initiate is anointed as Śākyamuni is.

After other rites the *yogins* are introduced to the enlightenment altar [i.e., the *maṇḍala* laid upon, or serving as an altar] wearing on their person the *diadem and bangles of the Buddha* [emphasis mine].

They are shown the mystic manual signs (*mudrā*), the sacred incantations (*dhāraṇī*), and the rite of attainment of Buddhahood⁶².

There is no example in either the Hindu Kush or greater Kashmir of an image of the jewelled Śākyamuni belonging to a complete iconographic configuration. We must turn to an object from the same time and general cultural sphere as the art of the Hindu Kush in order to demonstrate the logical, graphic relationship of the themes we have been discussing — the jewelled Śākyamuni, the abhiṣeka, and the maṇḍala. These themes, in a portable wooden shrine from the Turfan region, dated ca. ninth century, now in the Nelson Gallery (Fig. 46) are integrated and ordered into a symbolic hierarchy⁶³.

The vertical axis of the visual configuration is formed by an image identifiable as Śākyamuni⁶⁴. He wears a crown with floating streamers, a necklace, earrings,

crown seen on the Kashmiri bronzes and in niche 'i' at Bāmiyān. The former crown is known to represent the five Jinas. Similarly, one might consider the possibility that the triple crescent crown alludes to the three jewels.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 58, citing *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa Buddhist Himalaya*.

⁶² *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, fasc. 1, s.v. 'Abhiṣeka,' p. 129.

⁶³ Granoff, 'A Portable Shrine,' p. 94, dates this shrine to A.D. 850-950; Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, p. 248, dates this shrine to the eighth century, and notes the stylistic and iconographic parallels to medieval Kashmiri-style bronzes.

⁶⁴ Granoff, 'A Portable Shrine,' p. 90.

and bracelets, is surrounded by a flaming aureole, and sits on a lotus supported by a pair of divinities; unlike the other images, however, he wears Bodhisattva dress. A canopy and banners may suggest the abhiṣeka of the Buddha-to-be; however, as this feature occurs often, it may also have a more general, honorific meaning. Another form of abhiṣeka is concretely depicted: a scene of two Bodhisattvas consecrating an initiate. This consecration is demonstrated by anointing the devotee from the conch and by touching his head. Śākyamuni resides at the center of the maṇḍala. On the panels to either side of Śākyamuni are Dīpaṅkara and Maitreya, representing the eternal presence of the dharma⁶⁵. Also, eight Bodhisattvas are depicted. In addition to representing the maṇḍala of the eight Bodhisattvas, this configuration reminds us of the initiation (abhiṣeka) of the devotee who enters the maṇḍala and identifies with Śākyamuni.

The function of the symbolic configurations in the art of the Hindu Kush remains obscure. The symbolic intention of the iconography only partly can be explained through the literary description of the ritual and its liturgy. The images of the Buddha-to-Be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven and the maṇḍala-like compositions can never be completely understood separated from this living context. Their complex symbolism is revealed orally to the initiate during his religious training. The verbal and visual symbolism is never meant to be understood by the non-initiated.

The meaning of the type of jewelled Buddha found in the Hindu Kush, can be understood in part by reference to the *Mahāvastu*, as well as other contemporaneous texts, which may be considered representative of ideas associated with the Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika. Paul Mus' important study many decades ago demonstrated that ideas related to the jewelled Buddha are found in early Buddhist literature. He showed the development from the idea of the Buddha as Cakravartin found in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, to the idea of the 'Buddha-roi' as expressed in the *Mahāvastu*, then to the Mahāyāna notion of the Trikāya. Here the jewelled Buddha can be related to the transcendent Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra*⁶⁶ who preaches to a heavenly assembly of Bodhisattvas. Mus shows how the historical Buddha is transformed into the mythic idea of the Buddha Lokottara. He then concludes that the idea of 'the jewelled figure' appears to conform to the representation of the Buddha Lokottara⁶⁷. The jewelled Buddha from northeast India and southeast Asia, which Mus studied, was considered an expression of the 'three bodies of the Buddha' (Trikāya) theory.

While Mus' basic perception is very close to my own, there are major differences. The Trikāya theory which is central to Mus' analysis does not appear in the art of the Hindu Kush, nor in the most important extant Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika text, the *Mahāvastu*. However, the nexus of Mus' ideas converging on the concept of a jewelled Buddha as a general construct seems valid for all variants of the iconographic type, but he does not address the problem of these different iconographic forms. Mus is only analysing a particular variant of the jewelled Buddha, which is limited to northeast India from the eighth to twelfth centuries and to southeast Asia. This iconographic type is not found in the Hindu Kush. Mus' images are distinguished from the type of jewelled Buddha that we have been study-

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 91. The Rockefeller bronze with two stūpas also represents Buddhas on either side of the crowned Śākyamuni, the ensemble depicting the theme of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

⁶⁶ P. Mus, 'Le Buddha paré. Son origine indienne. Çākyamuni dans le Mahāyānisme moyen,' pp. 171 ff.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 266.

ing (which Mus may not have known) by their crown type, broad necklace, absence of both a cape and shoulder effulgences, and mudrā which is quite frequently the *bhūmisparśamudrā*. Comparison to earlier Indian images allows me to identify our images in the *vitarkamudrā* (and occasionally also *dharmacakramudrā*) as the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven.

Based on Hsüan-tsang's eyewitness description of the colossal Buddha images, it would be possible to suggest that the main icons at Bāmiyān did indeed represent, by their glorious attire and supernatural size, the Buddha 'Lokottara'; other images in the Hindu Kush had more specific iconographic attributes and therefore more specific meanings. An example is the *abhiṣeka* of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, symbolized by the shoulder effulgences and jewelled cape. I will propose in the next section that the second type of jewelled Buddha represented in the art of the Hindu Kush can be identified as Maitreya, Buddha of the Future. This Buddha type wears a monastic gown, crown, and jewels, but no cape, and is usually represented with the image of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni. The function of these images remains unresolved, although Mus' conjecture that they were related to 'secret' practices is also possible in the Hindu Kush. However, it is unlikely that we will ever know what forms of ritual practice were current at Bāmiyān.

It is interesting to note the iconographic relationship between the jewelled Buddha of the Hindu Kush and the earliest example from historical northwest India of the fundamental image of Vajrayāna art — the Five Cosmic Buddhas (Jina, Tathāgata). The representations of the four Jina found in the Peshawar stūpa (Fig. 95), ca. eighth century (the fifth is only implied at the center by the vajra embossed on the dome), is related in style and iconography to the Hindu Kush jewelled Buddhas. This relationship represents, in part, the ideological connection between the two variants of the jewelled Buddha and the Jina. In Vajrayāna this idea of the transcendent Buddha is both expanded and elaborated upon through the concept of the Five Jina, each ruling one of the sectors of the universe. United within the graphic configuration of the maṇḍala, they rule the cosmic spheres.

Postscript

An bone reliquary attributed to Kashmir, ninth-tenth centuries, highlights our newly defined image of the *abhiṣeka* of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, and is the most complete iconographic representation of this image. The largest and main scene represents a Buddha seated on a throne wearing a jewelled and fringed three-pointed cape with shoulder effulgences, a tri-partite crown set above rosettes and large earrings. He also wears bracelets, necklaces, and performs the *dharmacakramudrā*. He sits under a pointed arch which appears to be held up by flying divinities (similar to the Central Asian wooden shrine from the Nelson Gallery). There are four unidentified figures seated to either side. He sits on a throne placed above symbols of the seven jewels of the cakravartin. Citing this present study, Martin Lerner identifies this scene as representing the ritual cosmic consecration of the Buddha-to-be in the Tuṣita Heaven. This scene is chronologically first in the representation of the last phase of Śākyamuni's spiritual journey. Following his sojourn in the Tuṣita Heaven, Śākyamuni descends to earth for the last time. Here he is shown emerging from his mother's side, the last scene shows him in Bodh-gayā overcoming the assault of the Māras. In referring to the analysis con-

tained in this study Lerner says that the placement of the scenes on this reliquary 'fits very nicely into [the] hypothesis. One could theoretically walk around the icon clockwise to view the scenes as a kind of continuous narrative of events in a manner corresponding to the circumambulation of a stūpa'⁶⁸. He suggests that the traces of polychrome indicate that the image was once used in Tibet.

The Iconographic Program at Bāmiyān

The image of the Buddha-to-be in the Tuṣita Heaven represents the culmination of the spiritual career of Śākyamuni, which is also the main theme of the *Mahāvastu*. The docetic philosophy presented in this text emphasizes the transcendent nature of Śākyamuni. The reduced interest in the historical Śākyamuni in part explains the absence of pictorial and dramatic details in the art of the Hindu Kush. The limited number of deities that occur in the Hindu Kush can all be identified in the narrative of the spiritual career of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni as told in the *Mahāvastu*: Dīpaṅkara (the Buddha of the past), the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa, and Maitreya (the Buddha of the future).

Maitreya

Maitreya, Śākyamuni's spiritual successor and appointed heir, seems to be represented in three iconographic variants in the art of the Hindu Kush. It is useful to note the differences between the two main types of Maitreya images found here although the theological implications which are both subtle and historically complex take us beyond the boundaries of the present discussion. The most frequently represented variant is the Bodhisattva Maitreya. The frequent appearance and central placement of this Bodhisattva leave no doubt about its enormous importance in the Buddhism of the Hindu Kush. This variant, characterized by his Bodhisattva garments is painted in the central panel at the center of the soffit of several of the external niches — Bāmiyān: H, E, 55-meter perhaps and caves G, K and Kakrak (Fig. 47) —, the head is always to the south and the feet to the north. Almost all examples are effaced. Where the hands remain, the left hand holds a kamaṇḍalu (water pot) in its palm and the right hand forms the vitarkamudrā. It is likely that this configuration symbolizes Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven. This is a popular theme in Central Asian art, particularly in Kizil where there are strong iconographic and formal similarities to the Bāmiyān Bodhisattvas (see chapter VI, Fig. 17). In Kizil, this identification has been suggested by the pictorial context and the placement of the scene in the uppermost section of the composition, usually above a doorway. The placement at Bāmiyān may be considered analogous.

The second and less frequently represented variant is the Buddha of the Future, Maitreya, also in Tuṣita Heaven. Again these examples are much defaced and can only be reconstructed by analogy to complete examples elsewhere. The most complete examples are the first and sixth figures in the central panel of niche 'i' (see Descriptive Catalogue and Fig. 3, where only the first three and a half figures appear). Here we find a figure in monastic dress and crown, but no other adornment. This figure is next to a Buddha with crown, jewels, and the three-pointed

⁶⁸ M. Lerner, *The Flame and The Lotus*, pp. 74 ff.

cape. He may perform a variant of the vitarkamudrā. The most complete representations of this pair are the stone sculptures from Parihāspura in Kashmir (Fig. 41).

It is possible that in the 55-meter Buddha niche a Buddha figure with a crown, but no other adornment, was represented next to the Buddha with a three-pointed jewelled cape, crown, shoulder effulgences, and jewels. Today only the top of the crown remains (Fig. 49). This figure would have been the last in a row of five Buddhas. Thus, it may be identified as the future Buddha Maitreya by placement as well as by reference to the *Mahāvastu*⁶⁹. In this text the Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa are listed as Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni, and the future Buddha, Maitreya. The identification of Maitreya is also suggested by the placement of the figure last in line after Śākyamuni. (In niche 'i' the figures read from the center out). Again, we recall that in the *Mahāvastu* great emphasis is placed on the obligation of the sovereign (both the terrestrial and the universal) to appoint his successor⁷⁰. Thus, there is an intimate relationship between the Buddha and his successor. 'Kāśyapa proclaimed Śākyamuni. And I who am Śākyamuni have proclaimed Maitreya [...] In the succession of these Buddhas the last will be Maitreya. Mighty in power [...]'⁷¹.

In addition to these two types: the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven and the Future Buddha Maitreya also in the Tuṣita Heaven, there are painted and sculpted images of the Bodhisattva Maitreya from Fondukistān where the Bodhisattva holds the kamaṇḍalu and in the right hand a flower (Fig. 14).

Dīpaṅkara Buddha

Several images of the Buddha with flaming shoulders have been recently uncovered in the Hindu Kush. Also, they are a well known feature of the art of Kapiśa. Because of the regional importance of the motif, we earlier accepted Rowland's suggestion that the 55-meter Buddha also had shoulder flames and proposed to identify this image as Dīpaṅkara. Because of the importance of this hypothesis for the iconographic program of the Bāmiyān Valley one should review the meaning of shoulder flames in the art of the region.

In the Kapiśa region, Dīpaṅkara Buddha is identified by light symbolism expressed as flaming shoulders. The name Dīpaṅkara means 'light bearing,' so in the *Mahāvastu*, as in other texts, this Buddha is associated with blazing light. 'Like the blazing sun when it is high in the sky in autumn, so did Dīpaṅkara stand with his radiance pervading a hundred yojanas'⁷².

The seated figure with shoulder flames in the painting on the inside of the 55-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 48) may be identified as Dīpaṅkara Buddha on the basis of its location. This figure is the first (located in the lower southwest corner) of a series of seated Buddhas, perhaps representing the many Buddhas of the past, of which the first is always the Buddha Dīpaṅkara. In the *Mahāvastu*, as in other Buddhist texts, these Buddhas are frequently enumerated.

The identification of the seated Buddha with shoulder flames in Cave A is less certain. However, in this cave three large seated Buddhas are painted surrounded by smaller seated Buddhas. Therefore, the large Buddhas might represent the

⁶⁹ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. III, p. 233.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 52.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 230.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Buddhas of the past, present and future with the first being the Buddha Dīpaṅkara with flaming shoulders.

Among sculptures from the Kapiśa region are a number of life-sized, standing stone statues of the Buddha with shoulder flames; these represent either Dīpaṅkara or Śākyamuni at the miracle of Śrāvastī. A short excavation conducted by Shaibai Mostamandi near Gulbahār, in Kapiśa province, revealed an unusually large number of Buddha images with flaming shoulders. Recently, an over-life-size stucco Buddha image with flaming shoulders was found near Kunduz. Stylistically, this Kunduz image appears to date from the seventh century.

If we accept the hypothesis mentioned earlier that the 55-meter Buddha at Bāmiyān had flaming shoulders, then it would have been similar to the Dīpaṅkara Buddha at Shotorak. At Paitāvā on the other hand, a large standing Buddha with shoulder flames and water flowing from his feet represents Śākyamuni at the miracle of Śrāvastī.

The hypothetical identification of the 55-meter Buddha as Dīpaṅkara (Fig. 22) is based on (1) the super-colossal size of this Buddha, (2) the structures over its shoulders that had numerous holes for wooden dowels, which may have been an armature for flames, and (3) its stylistic similarity to the Dīpaṅkara Buddhas, prevalent in the art of Kapiśa. The parallels offered by the Dīpaṅkara and Śākyamuni statues from Shotorak — the only Buddhas represented at these sites — suggest that the 38-meter Buddha at Bāmiyān, as Hsüan-tsang had indeed stated, would be the Śākyamuni Buddha and that the 55-meter Buddha would be the Dīpaṅkara; for at Shotorak, as Soper noted, this Buddha always towers above the smaller Śākyamuni and 'reveals the special local position of Dīpaṅkara by making him an oversized icon against whose colossal scale even Śākyamuni is dwarfed'⁷³.

There are other indications of the regional importance of this attribute. Flaming shoulders appear on images of some of the Kuṣāṇa kings on their coins. This fact, combined with legends explaining the phenomenon of shoulder flames together with the great king Kaniṣka have led to the conclusion that in Kapiśa shoulder flames were an attribute of a divine king. The legend about Kaniṣka which is set near Bāmiyān and is recorded by Hsüan-tsang, tells how the king emitted smoke and flames from his shoulders in order to subdue an evil nāgarāja⁷⁴. The main point of the legend for our purposes is that 'Kanishka summoned forth the fruits of the merits of his former births by which he had become a cakravartin, conqueror of Jambudvīpa, and from his shoulders came smoke and flames, and the nāga fled. This tale has the ring of an authentic myth of regal powers because of the shoulder flames which appear in the coin portraits of the Kushan emperors. This is one of the main elements in the iconography of Kushan kingship'⁷⁵.

Iconographically, the particular association of the Buddha with flaming shoulders seems to have been a specialty of the monastic workshop at Shotorak and Paitava near Kāpiśa. At Shotorak, flaming shoulders illustrate the miracle of Śrāvastī [...]; they also appear in scenes of the Dīpaṅkara Jātaka and of the Buddha meditating in the dhyānimudrā — motifs which are elsewhere usually shown without this detail⁷⁶.

The recent discovery of so many Buddhas with flaming shoulders in Bāmiyān

⁷³ Soper, 'Aspects of Light Symbolism,' vol. 12, pp. 225-283, 314 ff.; vol. 13, pp. 63-85.

⁷⁴ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. I, pp. 63-65.

⁷⁵ Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts*, p. 29.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

demonstrates its importance in the Hindu Kush as well. Because these shoulder flames occur in typologically consistent contexts, it seems reasonable to conclude that in the Hindu Kush, as in Kapiśa, the motif had a specific meaning. In contrast, the more ubiquitous use of flaming shoulders in the first style at Kizil, appears to have a more general meaning like a mandorla⁷⁷.

The Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa

Hsüan-tsang's report of the colossal image of the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa, which is now lost, is our only evidence for this colossal figure at Bāmiyān; however, painted representations of this theme have been revealed in groups F, K, E, G, in addition to the much effaced examples of the scene previously known from Cave J. The iconographic peculiarities of this type at Bāmiyān have recently been explored but not totally explained⁷⁸. Questions remain concerning the figure seated at the head of Śākyamuni, and the relationship between the Mahāparinirvāṇa and the maṇḍala that is often associated with it, likewise the symbolism of the sun and moon.

It is interesting to note, however, that the colossal Mahāparinirvāṇa sculpture appears to confirm a late date for the three colossi at Bāmiyān. The other two colossal Buddha sculptures of the Mahāparinirvāṇa type in the region both date to the seventh and eighth centuries — one is at Tapa Sardār, Ghazni, the other at Adžina Tepe, U.S.S.R.

Bāmiyān: The Iconographic Program of the Main Façade

We have now seen each of the major iconographic types in the art of the Hindu Kush: the Dīpaṅkara Buddha, the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha Maitreya. How do these images relate to each other?

Each of the colossal niches in the façade served a function similar to the compartments on a stūpa; each contained a pictorial symbol representing a moment in Śākyamuni Buddha's life. In the order that Hsüan-tsang described the images, they provided the visitor with a chronological pendering of Śākyamuni's spiritual career. The pilgrim visited the site from west to east so that as he performed the pradakṣiṇā around each of the colossi, he was moving in the prescribed clockwise direction. According to Hsüan-tsang, the first image to be visited was the West Great Buddha (55 m), which I identified as the Dīpaṅkara Buddha, symbolizing the beginning of Śākyamuni's career. From this moment he is said to be free from worldly desires⁷⁹.

⁷⁷ Although lacking specific reference to light symbolism, Nepalese medieval images of Dīpaṅkara are otherwise typologically related. A relatively large, standing Buddha in *abhaya mudrā* with crown and royal attire is always identified as Dīpaṅkara. I thank Eva Allinger for her observation.

⁷⁸ A. Miyaji, 'La Scène du Parinirvāṇa dans la grotte F à Bāmiyān.' Comparisons are drawn to parinirvāṇa scenes from Shotorak and Tun-huang. I have, in other instances, also demonstrated important affinities to these two Buddhist sites particularly to the centers in Kapiśa-Shotorak and Paitāvā. The proposed date for the paintings, however, follows the logic that the Bāmiyān example must be earlier than the Central Asian examples; since the Tun-huang painting is dated ca. A.D. 600 the Bāmiyān painting is dated to the mid-sixth century. I prefer to think of these paintings as based on related textual sources and therefore neither is necessarily derived from the other (*ibid.*, p. 4). See also Miyaji, 'The Parinirvāṇa Scenes of Bāmiyān: An iconographical Analysis.'

⁷⁹ *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I, pp. 127-128.

Finally, the most impressive image of the ensemble was the jewelled Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa, representing the moment when Śākyamuni was freed from future rebirth and entered nirvāṇa. On earlier Gandhāran monuments represented scenes from Śākyamuni Buddha's Life the life as well as various *Avadāna* and *Jātaka* tales. It is logical that at Bāmiyān these historical events are not portrayed, since the Lokottaravādins emphasized the transcendent nature of Śākyamuni and his spiritual career.

The tripartite division of the façade at Bāmiyān echoes the division of the life of Śākyamuni in the *Mahāvastu*: three sections dealing with: He-who-would-be Śākyamuni at the time of Dīpaṅkara, Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven, and finally, Śākyamuni after enlightenment and the monastic community. Similar phases are outlined in the prologue to the *Mahāvastu*⁸⁰.

In this chapter we have confined our discussion to Buddhist themes in the art of the Hindu Kush. The unified conception underlying the form, theme and function of the Buddhist art of Bāmiyān can best be explained by the hypothesis of a single continuous source of patronage. Within the context of its role as a Buddhist pilgrimage center, the most important repercussion of centralized planning for the site would be the existence of a single doctrinal viewpoint. We have seen that throughout the art of Bāmiyān, Kakrak, and Folādi, and to some extent Fondukistān, Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāmghika ideas could be identified. The principal motifs in the art of the Hindu Kush can be identified in the Lokottaravādin vinaya, the *Mahāvastu*, but these ideas are not unique to this text. An examination of contemporary literary documents and artistic monuments demonstrates that these themes are also found in the Mahāyāna works of the greater cultural area adjacent to the Hindu Kush.

A principal doctrine in the *Mahāvastu* is the conception of the Ten Bhūmis, a concept serving the same function of a moral example for laymen as the *Jātakas* and *Avadānas*. There are no pictorial scenes representing stories from the latter in the Hindu Kush.

Analysis of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven demonstrates the importance of royal symbolism and local tradition in formulating the image. The literary source for the image may have been the *Mahāvastu*, which includes discussion of the spiritual biography of Śākyamuni and emphasizes his transcendental nature. The art of the Hindu Kush reflects this doctrine.

The stylistic and iconographic elements of the art reinforce each other in presenting the spiritual biography of Śākyamuni. The linear, idealized quality of the Bāmiyān style is consistent with the hieratic nature of the configurations, which also serve as cult images. The organization of these configurations, the symbolic economy that suppresses all historical details, and the use of royal symbolism, all reinforce the image of the transcendent Buddha Śākyamuni, who is the sacred axis of the configurations.

Each of the colossal configurations in the central façade at Bāmiyān served the same function as a narrative panel decorating a stūpa. Therefore, the rock façade of the main Buddhist center at Bāmiyān can be considered as a functional unit with a single iconographic program. The Dīpaṅkara, Śākyamuni, and the Mahāparinirvāṇa represent the key moments in the spiritual career of Śākyamuni, whose heir, Maitreya, reflects the continuity of the dharma.

⁸⁰ M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. 187-193, n.b. p. 188 citing the *Mahāvastu*, vol. I, pp. 193 ff.; vol. II, pp. 1 ff.; vol. III; and *The Mahāvastu*, vol. I, pp. 3-5.

The great rock-cut façade in the Bāmiyān Valley, the political and religious center of the kingdom of Bāmiyān, projected the message of the Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika to all the pilgrims and merchants passing through the Hindu Kush. Throughout the Buddhist world, the central monument in a Buddhist pilgrimage site usually communicated to the devotee the experience and lesson of the journey to enlightenment. This was true of such diverse monuments as the stūpas of Sāñcī and Borobudur and the main caves of Yün-kang and Lung-mên. It was thus both consistent with Buddhist tradition and the tenets of the Lokottaravādin that the art of the central façade should also symbolize Śākyamuni's spiritual journey.

Finally, it is Hsüan-tsang who recreates for us the original impression of the façade adorned with the three colossal Buddhas — gilded, painted, and bejewelled. His narration also explains to us the manner in which the pilgrim was meant to visit the site: from west to east, beginning with Dīpaṅkara and ending with the Mahāparinirvāṇa.

It might be argued that both the colossal statues at Bāmiyān and the crowned and bejewelled image of the Buddha were efforts to achieve a visual representation of the idea of a supramundane Buddha. Another of these iconographic experiments originating from the adjacent region of Kapiśa was the oversized image of the Miracle of Śrāvastī which attempted to represent a Buddha who became the 'moment of synthesis of the universe, the center from which radiated the infinite Buddhas in all directions, the source of fire and water'⁸¹. Seen from this perspective the art of eastern Afghanistan in the sixth through eighth centuries paralleled experiments in Buddhist philosophy. The supramundane Buddha of the Lokottaravādin doctrine elsewhere was redefined in even more cosmic dimensions. In Vajrayāna Buddhism, his vast and timeless nature was expressed through the quinary principle so that a different Buddha (i.e., different facets of the all-encompassing Buddha nature) ruled over the four quarters of the universe and the center. These Five Buddhas and their families could be combined in the maṇḍala to create an image of cosmic dimensions. It is this symbolic representation which came to express the omniscient and timeless Buddha nature.

⁸¹ M. Taddei, *India: Monuments of Civilization*; Idem, 'Appunti sull'iconografia di alcune manifestazioni luminose dei Buddha,' pp. 435-449.

Chapter VIII

The Meaning and Function of the Buddhist Complex in the Bāmiyān Valley

The king of this (country), every time he assembles the great congregation of the Wu-che (Môksha) [Pañcavārṣika pariṣad], having sacrificed all his possessions, from his wife and children down to his country's treasures, gives in addition his own body; then his ministers and the lower order of officers prevail on the priests to barter back these possessions; and in these matters most of their time is taken up.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 51-52)

In the preceding chapter we attempted to explain the distinctive Buddhist iconography of the Hindu Kush by reference to contemporary Buddhist art and practices. In Part I we discussed the doctrines of the Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika, as well as other contemporaneous ideas as contained in surviving Buddhist texts. We repeatedly noticed, however, the influence of other factors, political and socioeconomic in nature, which also affected the evolution of Buddhist institutions and practices in the Hindu Kush. In the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush, three distinguishing features were noted: (1) visual themes parallel to the Lokottaravādin ideas, (2) late Mahāyāna ('proto-Tantric') themes, and (3) the widespread use of royal imagery in a Buddhist context, including the group of dynastic personages. It is these images that provide the clue to an additional meaning of the site.

In this chapter, I will suggest that in addition to serving as a Buddhist pilgrimage site, Bāmiyān also may have served periodically as a site for state assemblies. In attempting to identify these state institutions I will attempt to define the courtly traditions present at Bāmiyān as evidenced by the non-Buddhist images.

In the chapter on the history of the Hindu Kush, I proposed that the monumental rock-cut complex at Bāmiyān was created during the period when the Western Turks were the nominal overlords of central and northeastern Afghanistan. The expansion of the complex in the Bāmiyān Valley may have been the result of the encouragement of the Yabghu of the Western Turks in the beginning of the seventh century. The site must have also benefited from the prosperity achieved under his successor, T'ung Shih-hu (ca. A.D.619-630), who was an ardent Buddhist. During his reign, the boundaries of the Western Turk empire were extended to Kapiśa and international trade increased. Thus, the increased activity at Bāmiyān, both political and religious, resulted from Bāmiyān's location at an important junction of the trade routes. The archaeological evidence shows that the other Buddhist sites along

this central route also date from the sixth to eighth centuries, indicating the increased importance of the trade route at this time. As previously discussed, long distance trade was the economic backbone of the empire. Maintenance of the trade route was the responsibility of the Yabghu. In order to secure the safe passage of the caravans along this long and dangerous route from China/Central Asia to India, it was necessary to maintain an army and to provide commercial centers for the relay of goods and the care of the caravans. Monasteries grew up in the major commercial centers along these trade routes and in time came to provide the entire range of services necessary to the maintenance of trade. Thus, in addition to their primary spiritual function, monastic complexes also functioned as hospitals, schools, and banks. Thus, the flourishing of these new Buddhist centers can be directly linked to the expansion of trade along this route in the sixth and seventh centuries.

The Buddhist Pilgrimage Complex

We have no information about the economic organization of the monastic centers in the Hindu Kush, but it is safe to assume that they fulfilled the same complex functions as the other monastic sites along the trade routes¹. It is also likely that the Mahāsāṃghika communities in the Hindu Kush took an active role in the development of the economy. This school seems to have been particularly active in China and in India in the development of agrarian economies². In India, the Mahāsāṃghika were also active at cave monasteries which occupied important locations on the trade routes. Kārli and Ajaṇṭā are examples of wealthy trade route monasteries where Mahāsāṃghika were active. We cannot know just how these activities — religious, commercial, and political — interacted in the daily life of the monasteries of the Hindu Kush. But, there is sufficient evidence from the artistic remains at Bāmiyān to suggest some of the functions served by the complex for the contemporaneous population.

It is now possible to consider the function, as a whole, of the main Buddhist center (which was next to the capital city) in the Bāmiyān Valley within the context of the historical and cultural setting which has now been established for the kingdom of Bāmiyān. In addition to the literary and artistic evidence, there are two other types of evidence from which the function of the site might be deduced: architectural and epigraphic.

There is no direct architectural evidence but only the literary reference by Hsüan-tsang for a residential unit (vihāra) at Bāmiyān. He tells us that a vihāra was built in front of the rock façade. It is likely that all the monastic dwellings were constructed of the traditional material still in use today, mud brick, and were built in the valley, closer to water. Thus, only the architectural units used for meditational, ceremonial or ritual purposes were carved into the façade. The only living quarters known from the Hindu Kush is the mud-brick vihāra partially excavated at Fondukistān.

No inscriptions have been found at Bāmiyān or at any of the sites of the Hindu Kush, in contrast with a Buddhist cave site such as Ajaṇṭā, where dedicatory inscriptions have been found. The epigraphic evidence from Ajaṇṭā indicates that monks and laymen contributed toward the construction and establishment of the

¹ Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 266.

² *Ibid.*, p. 268.

site³. Inscriptions were usually the primary indication of patronage in a Buddhist cave site and their absence at Bāmiyān seems to indicate a lack of diversity or a single source of patronage. Kosambi also considers a lack of dedicatory inscriptions to be characteristic of medieval cave sites of the developed feudal period, when individual and guild participation in the patronage of Buddhist monuments was no longer important.

The evidence for the architectural function of the caves is provided by the dimensions of the caves (see Descriptive Catalogue) and the floor plans of the caves (see List of Figures). The most significant features of the architecture are the relatively small size of almost all the caves, the absence of any vihāra plan, the small number of caves large enough to have served as meeting halls, and the absence of practical conveniences, which would be necessary for the obligatory Buddhist three-month retreat. A number of caves form interconnected groups (e.g. A, D, C) and their function must be understood accordingly. The small, completely decorated caves were usually provided with one or more statues as a focus for worship. Often there is a small, undecorated cell attached to the larger decorated caves, probably a monk's cell. These features suggest that the primary function of the caves was to serve as a setting for ritual worship or meditation.

The many caves served not only the local populace, but also the numerous pilgrims and merchants who travelled through Bāmiyān on their journey across the Hindu Kush. By offering prayers and donations, the traveller hoped to assure his safe completion of the difficult journey ahead. In this manner a significant income accrued to the religious sites located on the major trade routes. In the words of Hsüan-tsang, 'The merchants conjecture in coming and going whether the gods and spirits (or the heavenly spirits) afford propitious omens; if the indications are calamitous, they offer up their prayers (seek religious merit)'⁴.

The small, decorated chapels were the setting for personal worship. In addition to these small chapels, another type of ritual space can be defined at Bāmiyān, the large external space associated with the colossal Buddhas.

State Ceremonial at Bāmiyān: The Pañcavārṣika

The colossal Buddhas served as a focus for both public and private ritual. Through the rite of circumambulation and the devotions paid to each of the majestic colossal images carved into the façade, the Buddhist experienced the spiritual career of Śākyamuni. On the public level, the entire community assembled before the Buddhas and participated in a ritual performance that assured the physical and spiritual prosperity of the community.

Hsüan-tsang describes in detail a unique Buddhist ceremony that he calls the Pañcavārṣika, which was performed in his time by the kings of Bāmiyān, Kapiśa, Kucha, and Kanauj⁵. In addition, he specifically states that the annual performance of this ceremony was the responsibility of the king of Bāmiyān. We are fortunate to have two types of evidence for this ceremony: literary and artistic. According to the literary description provided by Hsüan-tsang, the ceremony took place

³ Begley, 'The Chronology of Mahāyāna Buddhist Architecture and Painting at Ajanṭā,' pp. 59-61. In Bāmiyān there are post-medieval graffiti in Indian languages.

⁴ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Book I, p. 50, fn. 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, 55, 217.

in front of the façade, most likely in the area between the image of the Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa and the statue of the Śākyamuni.

The king of this (country), every time he assembles the great congregation of the Wu-che (*Môksha*) [Pañcavārṣika], having sacrificed all his possessions, from his wife and children down to his country's treasures, gives in addition his own body; then his ministers and the lower order of officers prevail on the priests to barter back these possessions; and in these matters most of their time is taken up⁶.

The Sanskrit word Pañcavārṣika, when used as a substantive, means the festival gathering every five years. It is mentioned in the *Aśoka Avadāna* (volume III) in the *Divyāvadāna*⁷. In the *Abhidharma Vibhāṣāśāstra*⁸ the ceremony is described thus: 'and the distribution of drink and food to many people is said to have been held in order to cause the fulfilment of the donor's vow to become a *cakravartinrāja*'⁹.

The Pañcavārṣika is said to date to the reign of Aśoka and in fact Hsüan-tsang reports an Aśokan pillar at Pāṭaliputra with the inscription that records three performances of the ceremony: 'Aśoka-rāja [...] thrice bestowed Jambudvīpa as a religious offering on Buddha, the Dharma, and the assembly, and thrice he has redeemed it with his jewels and treasure; and this is the record thereof'¹⁰. It is not important here whether Aśoka was in fact the first king to perform this ceremony. What is important is the ideal of Aśoka's patronage of Buddhism combined with his political authority.

It is not until the first quarter of the fifth century that we have the first eyewitness description of this ceremony, Fa-hsien's description of the ceremony at K'ee-ch'a (Sarikol?)¹¹. The components are the same as in the ceremonies described by Hsüan-tsang 200 years later, occurring within the same extended geographical area (Kucha, Kapiśa, Kanauj, and Bāmiyān). The physical setting is most clearly described in Hsüan-tsang's account of Kucha:

Outside the western gate of the chief city, on the right and left side of the road, there are (two) erect figures of Buddha, about 90 feet high. In the space in front of these statues there is a place erected for the quinquennial assembly. Every year at the autumnal equinox, during ten several days, the priests assemble from all the country in this place. The king and all his people, from the highest to the lowest, on this occasion abstain from public business, and observe a religious fast; they listen to the sacred teachings of the law, and pass the days without weariness.

In all the convents there are highly adorned images of Buddha, decorated with precious substances and covered with silken stuffs. These they carry (*on stated occasions*) in idol-cars, which

⁶ Ibid., pp. 51-52. The last phase is translated by Professor Sh. Kuwayama (pers. comm.) as 'they take it for granted that such matters as this are a work of duty'.

⁷ *Divyāvadāna*, chaps. XXVI-XXIX, ed. E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil.

⁸ M.W. de Visser takes this from the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* (Nanjio, cat. no. 1263, p. 278) in de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, p. 193.

⁹ de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, p. 193.

¹⁰ Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Book VIII, p. 91.

¹¹ Fā-hien, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, p. 22. The place visited by Fa-hsien has recently been identified as Ladakh by J.N. Ganhar and P.N. Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, p. 177. Other earlier scholars placed the city in the Karakorum Mountains. For later references see also de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, p. 192; Fuchs, 'Huei Ch'ao's Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentral-Asien um 726,' p. 446; Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Vol. II, p. 298, fn. 46. According to Hui-ch'a-o (Huei Ch'ao), Kapiśa was the winter capital of the king of Gandhāra, whom he describes as performing the Pañcavārṣika (p. 446). Earlier it was also performed in Khotan. P. Pelliot, 'Neuf notes sur des questions d'Asie Centrale.' I would like to thank Prof. Victor Mair for this and other references.

they call the 'procession of 'images.' On these occasions the people flock by thousands to the place of assembly¹².

The consistent features of the ceremony can be deduced from the descriptions: the cyclical nature of the ceremonies, which occur usually in autumn; a sacred space that is created outside, but adjacent to the capital city, with the perimeters marked by the over-lifesize 'golden' Buddhas; a massive sacrifice of material wealth by the king; and a general confirmation of the king's devotion to the Dharma.

We have more information about the Pañcavārṣika documented in Japan, where it occurred only between the sixth and eleventh centuries. In China this ceremony also occurred between the sixth and eighth centuries. The symbolism may be seen as an affirmation both of the donor's vow to become a cakravartin-rāja and of his function in the religious sphere, as we may judge by comparison with Japan where the ceremony was moved from the temples to the palaces in the seventh and eighth centuries. From the lists of occasions when the Pañcavārṣika (in Japanese, *musha-daie*) was performed, several purposes for the ceremony may be inferred: to honor the emperor, to serve a magical function such as 'liberating the country from suffering'¹³ during a great drought, and to bring merit to the emperor, and thus by extension, benefit to his people.

In India, as also in Japan, the ceremony became rather widespread in the sixth to eighth centuries and then seems to die out. In both India and Japan this ceremony was often practised by groups that are associated with esoteric doctrines. It may, therefore, be a result of the esoteric concept of the union between the sacred and the secular domains¹⁴. A political overtone for the ceremony is confirmed by the restricted temporal occurrence of the ceremony, the association with Aśoka, and the statement that the ceremony is an obligation of a cakravartin. This ideal of a Buddhist ruler had clearly ceased to have a restricted Indian cultural connotation as can be seen from the popularity of this ceremony in Central Asia.

Although the Pañcavārṣika is said to have originated with Aśoka, who is also called a cakravartin-rāja, it is not until the post-Gupta period that this ceremony became important. It is not yet clear why this ceremony became important in this region at this time. Several factors need to be considered which arise from the historical, doctrinal, and political contexts. It is possible that this Buddhist ceremony evolved in part as a response to the revitalization of ancient Vedic state ceremonies by Gupta kings. Kosambi has suggested that in Harṣa's domain the ceremony allowed the many vassals of the king to gather together in affirmation of their tributary relationship¹⁵. Their presence, as well as that of the military, and the sumptuous pavilions and sculptures, testified to the prosperity of the kingdom. At the same time, the king, through the generous dispensation of justice, demonstrated his moral superiority. All of these relationships tended to reinforce the notion of sacredness attached to the institution of kingship. In the Pañcavārṣika, the king as a lay Buddhist legitimizes his own authority as protector of society including the saṅgha. Thus, the ceremony can also be seen as a paradigm of the merging of the lay and monastic interests which occurred in the Mahāyāna. It was not until the emergence of tantric concepts, specifically the idea that the whole world is sacred, that religious and secular authority could be merged without com-

¹² Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, Book I, pp. 21-22.

¹³ de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan*, p. 196.

¹⁴ In Japan, the *musha-daie* was performed by the Tendai and Shingon sects (*Ibid.*, p. 197).

¹⁵ Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 306.

plex justification. The historical evidence available for this region in the sixth to eighth centuries A.D. may indicate a non-dualistic view of society and its political authority.

Although the form and function of the Pañcavārṣika ceremony are still not fully understood, the elaborate, regularly performed rite appears to have 'become almost the full statement of kingship'¹⁶. From the description in the texts cited above, the ceremony appears to have emphasized both cyclical nature and history. The ritual served both juridical and religious purposes, demonstrating the importance of the king in the profane and sacred sectors. In addition, it clarified the king's place in the cosmic hierarchy as 'one of a large class of powerful beings, [...] controlling a department of nature or activity in the human sphere'¹⁷.

This type of ceremony is consistent with the Indian concept of kingship, which considers acts of charity and sacrifice as a primary obligation of a king, since these rites were seen as the means of gaining victory, possessions and other ends, and order in the universe¹⁸.

From the limited information available, it is not possible to decide whether the king of Bāmiyān was considered, as in the Indian tradition, a deva, meaning one among the gods, or as a deified being, as he appears in Khotan and, most likely, in Kabul. At the very least, we can assume that there existed, as in all Indian and Central Asian cultures, the sacredness attached to kingship and the association of political authority and supernatural power¹⁹.

The function of a Buddhist monumental complex as a setting for such a state ceremony in India or in Central Asia has not previously been discussed, although this function is well known in Tibet. It seems logical to assume that the Pañcavārṣika was not the only ceremony to reaffirm the king as a cakravartin-rāja within the Buddhist context. In Kashmir, according to Kalhāṇa, Lalitāditya, the Kashmiri king of the early eighth century, built Parihāspura in order to hold a festival called Sahasrabhakta, which is typologically similar to the Pañcavārṣika²⁰. In addition to serving as a setting for state ceremonials, there are other interesting parallels between Parihāspura and Bāmiyān, such as a colossal gilded statue of the Buddha, and the presence of the sculptures I have identified as the images of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni and his successor Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven.

The development of these public ceremonies within a Buddhist complex can be understood within the context of later Mahāyāna attitudes toward the participation of laymen in Buddhist practice. Throughout the areas adjacent to the Hindu Kush, later Mahāyāna ideas became, from the seventh century A.D. on, an increasingly important factor in Buddhist philosophy and practice. Both the Buddhist community (Saṅgha) and their doctrine (Dharma) had changed considerably since the early Nikāya phase, which involved a relatively more exclusive concept of who, and how one could obtain enlightenment. Mahāyāna Buddhism broadened its appeal by offering enlightenment to all sentient beings. There was, however, often a gap between the religious practices of the Saṅgha and the laymen.

A layperson would join the Saṅgha in a Buddhist ritual primarily during public

¹⁶ This analysis follows the study of kingship in East Asia by R. Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship: Accession Ceremonies in Japan*, p. 36.

¹⁷ J. Gonda, 'The Sacred Character of Ancient Indian Kingship,' p. 172.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 173-174.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 172 ff.

²⁰ Kalhāṇa's *Rājatarāṅgi*, Vol. I, pp. 142-146. The pair of statues from Parihāspura discussed in chapter VII depicts the same rare iconographic configuration found at Bāmiyān.

ceremonies. In addition, he could also perform some of the many types of devotional exercises which might assist toward his eventual enlightenment.

Finally, we must not overlook the economic function of the ceremony. The ceremony was actually a ritualized transfer of wealth from the ruling to monastic institutions. This process had a number of precedents within Buddhist tradition; first, the obligation of a Buddhist to make regular donations of either food or cloth to local monks, and second, the more abstract notion of sacrifice, which forms the central moral of the *Jātaka* tales. The vast scale of the princely donations is specifically related to the sacrifices of the Bodhisattva in the *Jātaka* tales. As Hsüan-tsang tells us, the king gave the Saṅgha not only all his family and possessions, but 'in addition, his own body.'

The wider implications of this large scale transfer of wealth from the ruling to monastic institutions is unclear. It would appear, however, that Buddhism had become the state religion and that some Buddhist ceremonies and art were used by the ruling institution for political propaganda. This question will be discussed further in the section devoted to pre-Islamic society in the kingdom of Bāmiyān.

In summation, the function of the Pañcavārṣika ceremony can be understood on four levels: (1) on the religious level, as identifying the goals of the nobility with those of Buddhism; (2) socially, as an integrating phenomenon bringing together the lay community, the Saṅgha (religious community), and the ruling élite, thus providing the community a mechanism through which to deal with the stress experienced by a trade route community, and the continuous influx of foreign influences.

Since the ceremony took place during a season of maximum mobility of pilgrims and merchants, it might also have served, in some degree, to integrate these transient subgroups with the permanent population. In any case, the population certainly benefited from the increased activity in the market place at the time of the ceremony; (3) economically, as a means of redistribution of surplus wealth principally through the Saṅgha; and (4) politically, by symbolically reinforcing the role of the ruling dynasty within the cosmic order. All in all, the ceremony demonstrates the merging of secular and sacred elements in Buddhist society, and the reinforcement of the role of the ruler as a protector of society.

Courtly Traditions in the Hindu Kush

As mentioned earlier, Hsüan-tsang considered the annual performance of the Pañcavārṣika ceremony to be an important function of the king of Bāmiyān. As we have seen, this ceremony was prominent at other centers throughout the region. It appears to have played an important role in defining social, political, economic and judicial relationships, and thus must be considered a key factor in explaining the function of the main complex in the Bāmiyān Valley.

The prominence of the Pañcavārṣika at Bāmiyān also allows us to suggest that the enigmatic frieze of royal donors painted in the niche of the 38-meter Śākyamuni statue (Fig. 4), is a representation of the Pañcavārṣika. The clue to the identification of this scene is the monk who is depicted in profile and who appears to lead the secular donors toward the Buddha next to whom he stands. It was through the intermediary of the priests that the king sacrificed his possessions to the Buddhist Saṅgha. The representations of royal donors might then be considered 'portraits' of the local dynasty offering their material possessions to the Buddha. As is noted in the Descriptive Catalogue, each facial type seems individualized and each per-

sonage gives a distinctive offering (Fig. 7)²¹. These figures provide the most important information about the dynasty ruling at Bāmiyān. In the absence of other types of historical information, such as epigraphic inscriptions and coins, these figures at least enable us to understand the cultural milieu to which the dynasty belonged.

We have literary evidence that the Pañcavārṣika was important in many Central Asian centers, which were Buddhist and under Turkic sovereignty. Similarly in the 38-meter niche painting the offerings and costumes appear to derive from Central Asia. The tunic type is worn in Sogdia but both types of costumes are found in Kucha. The same Central Asian types of dress were also worn later by the élite of northern Pakistan, as seen in images of donor figures that appear on Buddhist objects — sculptures, rock-engravings, manuscript covers, from ca. seventh-eighth centuries. Some of these images are to be attributed either by their inscriptions or by comparative analysis to the Šāhi (Figs. 1, 11, 38) of Gilgit. It is within this same extended cultural milieu that we find the closest analogies for the standing figure painted in the soffit of the 38-meter Buddha niche (Figs. 50, 51), as will be discussed below.

It is clear that the costumes used for courtly images in the Hindu Kush have a rather wide usage in Central Asia and northern Pakistan from the sixth to eighth centuries or even later. Further, as discussed in chapter III, the crowns worn by the princely figures in the 38-meter Buddha niche also have a rather extended use. It thus seems imprudent at this time to try to identify these figures either on the basis of costumes or crowns. It may be possible, however, on the basis of other indicative features, such as modes of representation (see chapter III for relationships to so-called 'NSPK' coins), and attributes, to understand the cultural milieu that this painting describes. This painting, as the NSPK coins, appears to contain Hephthalite cultural features within the historical context of the period of the Western Turks. For this inquiry an examination of the large standing figure between the rows of princely personages is particularly important. The meaning of this figure painted in the soffit of the niche between the rows of seated personages is unresolved. Furthermore, the relationship of this figure to the frieze of royal donors (Fig. 4) is not clear. Assuming that the frieze of royal personages represents the local dynasty performing the state sacrifice to the Buddha at the time of the Pañcavārṣika ceremony, and that there is a meaningful relationship between these figures and the standing image, then this painted figure standing over the colossal sculpture of Śākyamuni might be: (1) an aspect of Śākyamuni as Lord of the Universe surrounded by cosmic symbols, such as the crescent moon inscribed within the sun, wind, dawn, and perhaps planets, (2) a regional variant of the sun god, (3) the tutelary deity of the ruling house, (4) a deified king of the ruling dynasty (for which there may be precedents in Central Asia and Afghanistan), or (5) another celestial deity, perhaps from Central Asia.

²¹ These royal figures wear costumes found in contemporaneous arts: the male is the most common (i.e., fig. 38) but the Sasanian type is also found at Kakrak and in Pakistan (Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and Diamond Path*, fig. 10, in contrast to Tarzi's rather too specific explanation, *L'Architecture*, p. 128. Prof. Maurizio Taddei has suggested to me a variant reading of the frieze of donors in the 38-meter Buddha niche — so that the personage in profile is the king. This has the advantage of not contradicting our, admittedly vague, understanding of the role of Buddhist institutions, which are generally seen in that region and at that time as powerful but subservient to the ruling institutions. Thus only members of the ruling élite and Buddhas would be depicted here. One problem with this interpretation derives from the rule of frontality whereby the king would be the least important personage in this representation. This could only be explained by the other royal figures having a 'special status' such as ancestors.

All the possible explanations for the figure point to the same general conclusion that the image represents a regional figural type with royal attributes. Previously, the figure at the summit of the niche had been inconclusively identified at first by Hackin as a moon god, and then by Rowland as a sun god. In fact, although there are general similarities to a sun god, the total iconographic configuration bears no precise relationship to any known image in Buddhist art. There are, however, several figures in the art of the Hindu Kush and adjacent regions that can be compared to this figure.

The dress of this figure, in general, is the same Central Asian tunic worn by the dynastic figures. The differences lie in the arms he carries and the stance; the crown is partly obliterated.

We have only six images outside Bāmiyān to assist us in defining the iconography of the princely image in pre-Islamic Afghanistan. These male figures in Central Asian dress are all datable to about the seventh-eighth centuries A.D. Only two of these have been convincingly identified, that is the two marble sun gods from Khair Khāna near Kabul. These figures are also typologically related to the other four, although the crown is different and they do not appear to carry arms. The other four images are found in the art of the Hindu Kush: in Bāmiyān, Nigār, Fondukistān, and Kakrak.

Both at Bāmiyān and Nigār the main figure occupies the entire vertical space at the center of the composition. The same costume components are present: a Central Asian tunic, crown, and a long sword and staff. Unfortunately, the boots in the Bāmiyān painting are missing. Horses also appear in Bāmiyān, but they are clearly drawing a chariot driven by a small figure who stands directly under the large image.

The third figure type, from Kakrak, has been unsatisfactorily identified as the 'Hunter King' (Fig. 118). This image appears in the drum zone of the chapel and was contained in a frieze of Buddha images framed by the same type of blind arcade as that found at Nigār. The total iconography of the chapel clearly defines the painting as having a religious function. Here the 'king' does not form the center of the composition and is the same size as the Buddhas.

The other figures can be identified as guardian figures, the Vaiśravaṇa (Fig. 109) from Fondukistān and the figure on the stūpa in the Peshawar Museum (Fig. 53). I have elsewhere established that all of these figures derived from the Kuṣāṇa royal portrait type and developed in regions under Turkic control during the seventh to eighth centuries²². Why did so many sacred images in Central Asian dress appear at this time? Our inability to answer this question relates to the difficulty that we have in defining princely imagery during this period in Afghanistan and Transoxiana. This problem is particularly vexing when contrasted with the clearly defined princely tradition in the visual arts of Iran, which was the source for most of the royal motifs used in the art of Central Asia. Until recently, research concerning the iconography of the princely images has concentrated on the period of the Great Kuṣāṇas, specifically on the symbolism and mythology as evidenced on their coins and the architecture and sculpture at the site of Surkh Kotal, which has been considered to be a dynastic shrine.

The definition of kingship during this period still cannot be ascertained. However, as yet, there has been no evidence to contradict Rosenfield's conclusions that the Kuṣāṇa kings had assumed superhuman status and were associated with a cult of kings²³.

²² D. Klimburg-Salter, 'Vaiśravaṇa in Northwest India.'

²³ Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, pp. 202-206.

Both dynastic, as postulated for Afghanistan (in the Kuṣāṇa period), and ancestor cults remained important in Central Asia until the conversion to Islam²⁴. The significant influence of Kuṣāṇa culture on the later art of Central Asia has been thoroughly established by Soviet scholars. 'The main features of the art of Central Asia in the pre-Arab period sprang from a process of natural development of local traditions inherited from the art of the Kushan Kingdom'²⁵. The art of contiguous areas of Afghanistan could also be more clearly understood from this viewpoint.

A useful comparison for the composition in the 38-meter niche at Bāmiyān is provided by contemporaneous paintings from Sogdia. In several instances royal donors are represented in the service of their tutelary deity, or as deified personages. There is a scene at Varahśa of a husband and wife, adorned with halos and attending their tutelary deity²⁶. Thematically, this can be compared to the haloed donors in the 38-meter frieze at Bāmiyān.

In Sogdia, all of these groups of royal donors have a similar typology whether they occur in temples or residences. Maršak and Belenickij conclude from this that the religious content is secondary to the social function of the representations, which is meant to reinforce the feudal hierarchy²⁷.

Since there are no comparable compositions outside of the Sogdian examples, we may assume that the Bāmiyān example derives from a related cultural context and may have a comparable function. Unfortunately, little is known about the contemporary society and thus it is difficult to test this hypothetical relationship between the society and the symbolic hierarchy depicted in the painting, as we shall see in the following section.

There are, however, sufficiently unusual features of the Bāmiyān composition to prohibit a satisfactory conclusion based on the Sogdian examples alone. In fact, the lack of parallels prevents us from interpreting the symbolic vocabulary used here — both formal and iconographic — and relating this vocabulary to the socio-historical context as we now understand it. For instance, halos on princely figures occur also in Kucha, where they do not appear to imply that the person is divinized. Likewise there are a variety of features, besides the much discussed crowns, which are also found on coins, but in such an inconsistent manner that it is doubtful how meaningful this relationship is. One such feature is the different modes of representation, which appear to define a symbolic hierarchy. We will examine the possibility of relating this symbolic hierarchy to the various institutions within the local society.

Pre-Islamic Society in the Kingdom of Bāmiyān

There is no direct evidence for the socio-economic system that characterized the kingdom of Bāmiyān in the sixth to ninth centuries. For this reason it is particularly important to attempt to decipher the few indications that we have for the nature of relationships between the social classes. The iconography of the painting

²⁴ Belenitski, *Central Asia*, p. 217. This discussion assumes that Surkh Kotal is a dynastic shrine. It was not possible to evaluate publications appearing after this study was finished. See D. Schlumberger, M. Le Berre, and G. Fussman, *Surkh Kotal*.

²⁵ Belenitski, *Central Asia*, p. 214.

²⁶ V.A. Šiškin, *Varahśa*, Pl. XIV.

²⁷ A.M. Belenitski and B. Marshak, 'L'Art de Piandjikent à la lumière des dernières fouilles (1958-1968),' pp. 16-17.

in the 38-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 4) and the social function of the ceremony performed in front of the colossal sculptures provide our only clues to the relationship between Buddhist and princely institutions in Bāmiyān. The supplication of the prince to the Buddha may be graphically symbolized by the white scarf and the footed cup each held by a jewelled Buddha. These images at Bāmiyān of a jewelled Buddha holding the white scarf or a footed cup are the only known examples in Buddhist art. Both symbols originated in the Central Asian, probably Turkic, cultural milieu and may be interpreted as symbols of allegiance — here offered by the ruling house to the Buddha.

The symbolism of the scarf may be analogous to the 'white scarf offering' in Tibetan society, when a supplicant presents a white scarf to a superior (e.g., an abbot of a monastery) upon meeting and makes a petition, such as a request for a blessing. At Bāmiyān, the king would be the petitioner. The white silk scarf (in Tibetan, *kata*) has both religious and social significance. It is impossible to say when the custom of placing a white scarf on an honored person began in Asia, but it appears to be of considerable antiquity. One interesting story attributes the origin of this custom in Tibet to the eighth century. The conclusion of the story implies that following a miraculous sign, a Tibetan king, perhaps Sron-brtsan-sgam-po, recognized the superiority of Padmasambhava, at which time the latter returned the scarf that the king had given him. In this symbolic gesture we see the victory of spiritual over temporal power. The gesture of a high lama returning a white-scarf offering as a blessing to the donor is one of the basic rules of *kata* etiquette that survives until today in Tibetan society²⁸.

An analogous gesture of submission is symbolized by the cup held by the other Buddha figures. This custom was widespread among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. This depiction may be considered to derive from the 'cup drinking ceremony,' which among the nomadic Turks symbolized a pledge of loyalty to the feudal lord. Both the shape of the footed cup and manner in which the crowned Buddha holds the cup by the stem are unique in Buddhist art²⁹.

The white scarf and the footed cup symbolize the Buddha's superior position but do not apparently infer the superiority of the Buddhist hierarchy. The decisive key to relationships between the three groups represented in this painting may be provided by the mode of representation, specifically the symbolic value associated

²⁸ Ekvall, *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Functions*, pp. 156-157. Two images which seem to be typologically analogous are (1) a Buddha figure from Qocho dated to the T'ang (A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho*, Pl. 27) and (2) an image of Mañjuśrī painted on silk, which was collected by Stein from Tun-huang dating from the eighth century and associated with the Tibetan phase of occupation. A later article — Klimburg-Salter, 'Ritual as Interaction at Bāmiyān' — was derived from this chapter. A manuscript cover in Śrīnagar from the Gilgit finds also shows the motif.

²⁹ Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, Pl. XI and p. 47 passim; E. Esin, 'Central Asian Cup Rites.' This type of cup and the gesture may be compared to a Balbal found in Soviet Central Asia. (The frontally-depicted figure holds a cup by the bottom in his left hand. These enigmatic statues are considered by Soviet archaeologists to be characteristic of the Western Turks. The statues are found in areas that had been occupied by the nomadic Turks from the sixth to eighth centuries, but they have not been found in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, or south of the Oxus River.) We do not have enough information to evaluate the importance of this motif in the contemporary Hindu Kush, but later examples from adjacent regions do verify the continued importance of this motif. A footed cup held by or proffered to a seated princely figure is found on silver plates attributed to Pre-Islamic Khorasan (Fig. 44), Islamic art of the region, and the mural paintings of Alchi, Ladakh.

Another confusing feature is the fact that the other Buddhas of this type at Bāmiyān hold a *pātra* in the left hand. Thus, while the shape of the cup (and attached streamers) may derive from Central Asia, the meaning may still be that of the begging bowl (*pātra*) held by Śākyamuni.

with the device of frontality through which the Buddha is clearly presented as the most important figure.

The relationship between the Saṅgha and nobility is less obvious. The substantive element of the exchange is the actual transfer of wealth to the Saṅgha. Since the Saṅgha is functionally the recipient, it would appear to have the higher status within the context of the ceremony. However, a different hierarchy is indicated by the representation of the figures in the painting. The order of importance as specified by the device of frontality is: the Buddha, the nobility, and last, the Saṅgha. In all Hindu Kush painting only six figures are represented in profile: one in cave J and this painting (Pl. 4), two donors in cave C, Bāmiyān (Pl. 53), and two donors in Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan, all without halos. Donors with halos are in three-quarter profile. The combination of a frontal deity and a three-quarter profile representation of the prince is an innovation that occurs on Vrahitigin coins in the mid-seventh century and on later Śāhi coins. Despite the apparently higher status of the king, the functional importance of the Saṅgha is suggested by the placement of the monk next to the Buddha.

This clear differentiation of social hierarchy should not obscure the importance of the intermingling of these figures in the same composition and their depiction in the same scale. In fact, there may be a reference here to the essentially spiritual or religious role of the king. Since the true political and military powers of the region, according to Hsüan-tsang, were the Yabghu of the Western Turks and the king of Kapiśa, it is difficult to imagine that the king of Bāmiyān had any real political power beyond the Hindu Kush. As already mentioned, it is recorded that he was a vassal of the Western Turks.

The compositions that we have been discussing only represent the ruling élites, but what can we say about the function of the Buddhist center within the life of the community as a whole? Conversely, how did the different sectors of the society relate to the Buddhist centers?

Let us first review the conclusions reached in chapter III concerning pre-Islamic society in the kingdom of Bāmiyān. The kingdom of Bāmiyān was basically an agricultural society that also had a money economy associated with long-distance trade. The multiethnic society probably consisted of the ruling élite, which included the royal dynasty (who may have been either Hephthalite or Turkic) and their vassals, the old land-owning aristocracy (dihqāns), most probably Iranian. In addition, there was the military élite who may have been mostly Turkic. (It was the responsibility of all the vassals of the Western Turks, including the king of Bāmiyān, to supply the Yabghu with a standing army which must have been under the direction of the Turks). The urban middle class, mostly merchants and artisans, continued to be important in the trade centers. Throughout the region the great cities had declined and with them the importance of certain other urban-based social phenomena, such as guilds. However, this process was accompanied by a greater general prosperity³⁰. A multiplication of trade centers all along the trade routes created a decentralized economy of regional economic units which more efficiently redistributed agricultural products, as well as the economic surplus gained from international trade. The monasteries were important economic nodes within these trade centers. The monastery played a crucial role in both trade and agriculture.

The position of the peasantry is less clear. Kosambi's analysis of Hsüan-tsang's description of the condition of the peasantry in Harṣa's domain may be relevant

³⁰ Kosambi, *Introduction*, p. 303.

for the kingdom of Bāmiyān as well. Thus, it is possible that there was a free peasantry without serfdom. Lands were owned by the royal house, the dihqāns, and the monasteries. The monasteries were particularly active in developing the rural economy. Among the Buddhist groups, the Mahāsāṃghika seems to have been particularly active in this regard³¹. The Yabghu levied tribute upon the prince and he in turn derived this tribute from the land-owning aristocracy³². But the monasteries were exempt from this obligation.

Another important sector of society was the nomadic and seminomadic peoples. Their relationship to both long distance trade and the agricultural economy was always a critical factor in a Central Asian economy³³. During seasonal migrations, they would have gathered in the large commercial-religious center at Bāmiyān which also contributed to the economic success of the annual assemblies.

One aspect of this socio-economic system was the development, throughout the region, of the 'moving court' described at length by Hsüan-tsang when he visited the rulers of Kunduz, Kapiśa, and Harṣa of Kanauj. The large number of people, during the court's annual movements around the kingdom, consumed 'tax in kind.' This process must have had, in the long run, a debilitating effect for the agricultural economy, as all local surplus was consumed³⁴.

The Yabghu's wealth was derived in large part from international trade, which was protected by the large army (provided by his vassals) and which was facilitated by monastic complexes located in the commercial centers all along the trade routes. Monasteries in India and China were not only educational and cultural centers, but also financial centers. They provided banking facilities for merchants, as well as encouraged investment in agriculture. This pattern was also probably followed in Afghanistan.

We have little information about Buddhist institutions and society. As discussed in Part I, from the Kuṣāṇa period the ruling élite and the urban middle class were important supporters of Buddhism. The new factor during this period was the conversion of members of the Turkic aristocracy to Buddhism. Their support, as well as the general prosperity and decentralized economy described above, contributed to the spread of Buddhism, in the sixth through eighth centuries, beyond its traditional base in the urban centers.

In the context of their patronage of Buddhist monastic institutions, the Turks could have contributed, in addition to their financial support, some of their traditional beliefs and practices. Their modification of the visual symbolism at Bāmiyān was confined to secular imagery. The survival of Central Asian courtly motifs within the context of Buddhism may have resulted from political forces, as well as social custom.

The increasing wealth and independence of the monasteries (resulting from their economic role in long distance trade and their freedom from taxation) may have led to their emergence as an alternative power structure, threatening the power of the king. Facing this challenge, the ruling house could either grant the monasteries considerable independence, or integrate them into the state structure. The Pañcavārṣika ceremony appears to have been the ritualized statement of the second alternative — the new alliance between state and 'church.'

³¹ Ibid., p. 288.

³² Ibid., pp. 310-316.

³³ Belenitski, *Central Asia*, p. 201.

³⁴ Kosambi, *Introduction*, p. 303. For the discussion on monastic economy see Gernet, *Aspects économiques*; Gunawardana, *The Robe and the Plough*; Twitchett, 'The monasteries'.

The Function

There are three possible functions for the main Buddhist center at Bāmiyān based on the available information: (1) The Buddhist center was built by the ruling élite of the kingdom of Bāmiyān and served as a major pilgrimage center. (2) The Buddhist center was built by the dynasty of the king of Bāmiyān who was closely allied to the confederation of the Western Turks. The center served as both a pilgrimage center and as a periodic setting for state assemblies. (3) The Buddhist center was built under the patronage of the Yabghu of the Western Turks and administered by his vassal, the king of Bāmiyān. It served as a pilgrimage center and as a setting for periodic state assemblies.

The first and simplest hypothesis has been the assumed explanation for the center in the Bāmiyān Valley. Essentially this interpretation is no more verifiable than the third and most complex hypothesis. The first and second hypotheses support the theory of local patronage, but the first assumes only a limited political function; whereas the third hypothesis postulates remote patronage and an important political function. Since the first hypothesis has not yet provided a comprehensible picture of the meaning and function of the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush despite a half century of scholarship dealing with the question, it seems appropriate to pursue a more radical line of inquiry, if only to provide new perspectives on the meaning of the Buddhist complex in the Bāmiyān Valley and the art and culture of the Hindu Kush.

The main difficulty with this last hypothesis is our limited understanding of the role played by the Western Turks in Bāmiyān. If one accepts my conclusion that the most active period of artistic production was the seventh to ninth centuries, then the connection between the Western Turks and the center at Bāmiyān becomes inevitable. The question, however, is to what extent they were connected. Did the Western Turks merely provide the economic setting that encouraged the massive influx of pilgrim and merchant travel, which in turn financed and maintained the Buddhist centers in the Hindu Kush under the aegis of the ruling house? Or, at the other extreme, did the Western Turks directly patronize the main center at Bāmiyān, providing the main inspiration and the centralized direction for its iconographic program? What was the nature of the relationship between the Turkic ruling class, the local aristocracy, and the religious establishment at Bāmiyān?

And what, above all, was the motivation for the construction of the monumental center in the Bāmiyān Valley? The devotion of Buddhist merchants and pilgrims could not have been sufficient to explain the massive expenditure on the lavish public façade, which served as a backdrop for the public state ceremonies. Nor would diverse private donations explain the consistent pictorial decoration and architectural forms. There is no indication from numismatic or literary sources that the king of Bāmiyān had a strong enough political and economic position (see chapter III) to have allowed him to build such a monumental complex. Further, given the modest size and position of the 'kingdom' what would have been his purpose in expending such a disproportionate sum on the complex? Given our limited understanding of the culture of the region and particularly that of the Western Turks, these questions must remain open.

As one of the possible directions for further study, one might consider that only the Yabghu of the Western Turks, the nominal overlord of northwest Afghanistan as far as Kapiśa, had the means to construct such a monumental complex at the beginning of the seventh century.

The next logical question is — why would the Yabghu have built such a monumental center? There are several possible reasons. Firstly, we know already from Hsüan-tsang that one of the functions of the king of Bāmiyān (a vassal of the Western Turks) was to perform the Pañcavārṣika ceremony. We know also from Hsüan-tsang that the Yabghu and his viceroy in Afghanistan administered their territories by periodic visits with their 'moving courts.' The interpretation of this phenomenon and the importance of the Pañcavārṣika in this context has already been discussed. If the king of Bāmiyān was also the main administrative official (chapter III), then his occasional performance of the ceremony in place of his feudal lord (as on the occasion reported by Hsüan-tsang) would have been reasonable. If the Yabghu was a devout Buddhist — and we know that at least T'ung-shih-hu was, then to build a Buddhist monastic and pilgrimage center which also served as a setting for state assemblies could be seen both as an act of piety and political expediency.

This hypothesis does not contradict any of the known facts, it does, however, leave some facts unexplained: (1) What was the meaning of the deity depicted on the soffit of what originally was the center colossal Buddha (now the East Great Buddha)? (2) Why did new iconographic forms emerge at this time, which either merged royal and Buddhist symbolism (the jewelled Buddhas), or derived from the courtly imagery of Central Asia?

It is virtually impossible to answer these questions at this time but one possibility for further inquiry is that the complex in the Bāmiyān Valley may also have had a political function. Thus, in the mountains of the Hindu Kush, a ceremonial center may have been created. The ultimate answer to these questions undoubtedly lies within the complex cultural heritage of the region. The syncretic features identifiable at Bāmiyān and to a far greater degree at Nigār, can in part be traced to Sogdia. The continuous interaction between the Sogdians and the Western Turks on the one hand, and the Sogdian impact on Buddhism in Turkestan on the other hand are well documented in Transoxiana. However, it is still unclear to what extent Buddhist ideas affected the Western Turks, or if aspects of Turkic beliefs had been integrated into local Buddhist perspectives. In this context, it is useful to remember the notion attached to the Qaghan of his divinely ordained right to rule³⁵, and two ceremonies over which he presided³⁶, the annual pilgrimage and the offering to the sky deity, Tengri. Through these annual ceremonies the stability of the social order was secured³⁷ for, according to the Turkic world view, the sacred personage of the Qaghan fostered the creation of a political order mirroring the celestial order³⁸.

At this point there is no direct evidence for Western Turkic patronage of Bāmiyān. The Turkic epigraphic inscriptions from this period³⁹ clearly describe the political struggle between the Yabghu and the Qaghan in the sixth through seventh centuries. But there is no evidence that the Yabghu attempted to establish an alternative ceremonial center. We do know, however, that the Western and Eastern Turks each adapted elements of the culture of the dominant powers on their borders. Thus the hypothesis that the Eastern Turks had an artistic culture

³⁵ J.P. Roux, 'L'Origine céleste de la souveraineté dans les inscriptions paléo-turques de Mongolie et de Sibérie,' pp. 235 ff.

³⁶ L. Kwanten, *Imperial Nomads*, p. 45. See also R. Giraud, *L'Empire des Turcs*, p. 102 ff.

³⁷ Roux, 'L'Origine céleste,' pp. 238-241.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Giraud, *L'Empire des Turcs*, pp. 7-65.

strongly influenced by Chinese artists may be paralleled in the West. There is literary evidence for monumental architecture with mural paintings, and for perhaps even a dynastic shrine among the Eastern Turks, it is also probable that the Western Turks commissioned monumental architecture decorated with paintings. While the Eastern Turks may have followed Chinese artistic traditions⁴⁰, the Western Turks may have adopted the artistic traditions of the eastern Iranian culture of Central Asia. But there is no evidence at all for what these buildings may have been, nor for the style and function of the paintings other than the testimony from the East Asian pilgrims that the Turkic rulers built Buddhist monasteries and stūpas from Afghanistan to Kashmir.

Whether or not the Western Turks were involved in the patronage of Buddhist monuments in the Hindu Kush, it seems clear that the available evidence does allow us to postulate that in Bāmiyān Buddhism had become identified with the state.

The proximity of the royal capital to the main religious center of the Hindu Kush symbolized the dual function of the Buddhist establishment in Bāmiyān, which was both political and religious. Hsüan-tsang reports that the king was occupied with such overtly religious ceremonies as the Pañcavārśika. A political function was also inferred since the process reinforced the symbolic role of the ruling dynasty within the cosmic order. This particular ceremony exemplifies the merging of the secular and sacred elements in Buddhist society.

In the doctrinal sphere, the separation between the religious and secular currents dates to the beginning of Buddhism. The interaction and eventual merging of these elements is one of the main themes of the history of Buddhism. The Pañcavārśika ceremony can be seen as legitimizing the king's role as protector of the Dharma and Saṅgha. We see, thus, a parallel to the process noted in the development of the image of the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven where the aspect of Śākyamuni as cakravartin is emphasized. The importance of this image in the Hindu Kush combined with the politico-religious function of the principal ceremony at Bāmiyān suggests that here Buddhism had become clearly identified with the state. It is impossible to determine if we are dealing only with Buddhism as a state religion, or with the more complex phenomenon of a theocratic state. In either case, the dominant characteristic, which is a merging of the sacred and profane spheres, can be seen as a contemporary historical phenomenon identifiable, in the first case in China and Japan, or in the latter instance, in Tibet.

A more strictly religious function for the Pañcavārśika is its ritual embodiment of the virtues of sacrifice and benevolence with the ultimate goal of the release from future rebirth. The same lesson is afforded the practitioner when he performs the ritual visitation of the colossal images in the façade symbolizing the spiritual career of Śākyamuni, or when he performed his private pūjā in one of the numerous chapels.

One might also remember the more simple, magical function of this great religious center on the Indian branch of the 'silk routes,' where a simple act of devotion might insure the merchant's safe completion of his arduous journey across difficult and unknown lands.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 116-117, 199; B.A. Litvinskij and T.I. Zejmal', *Adžina Tepe*, pp. 110-132.

Chapter IX

Conclusion



These people are remarkable, among all their neighbours, for a love of religion (a heart of pure faith); from the highest form of worship to the three jewels, down to the worship of the hundred (i.e., different) spirits, there is not the least absence (decrease) of earnestness and the utmost devotion of heart. The merchants, in arranging their prices as they come and go, fall in with the signs afforded by the spirits. If good, they act accordingly; if evil, they seek to propitiate the powers.

(Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, p. 50).

We have few facts about the political and economic situation in the Hindu Kush during the sixth to ninth centuries. However, a general picture of the kingdom of Bāmiyān can be reconstructed. Bāmiyān was a Buddhist state at a strategic location on the trade route between China/Central Asia and India. Both the religious and political institutions were located in the Bāmiyān Valley, which also served as the commercial and administrative center for the western Hindu Kush. The valley must always have been important to the economy of the region and hence, some form of both marketplace and religious establishment may have been located there for centuries. However, it is not until the early seventh century that Bāmiyān entered the historical record. We may conclude that the Buddhist center as we now understand it was built during the period of the Western Turks and was related to the increased importance of the local trade route.

Bāmiyān was never a major political power, but rather a vassal state first of the Western Turks and later nominally of the Chinese following their conquest of the Western Turks. Bāmiyān's importance to both these powers seems to have been as a trade center, as one of the many links that secured the intricate relay system of long distance international trade. Some of the surplus from this trade was reinvested locally as can be seen from the expanded building program throughout the region and the large scale of the Buddhist establishments and their once-lavish decor.

The Buddhist art of the area can be seen as deriving from the artistic traditions of both India and Central Asia. Within the context of these artistic traditions, new themes and concerns arose which, during the Turkic period, became integrated into a meaningful visual vocabulary. The process by which this occurred has not yet been considered by cultural historians. Our study may be viewed as a first attempt to define the distinctive Buddhist art of the Turkic period in Afghanistan. The art

of the Hindu Kush appears to belong to the earliest phase of that tradition, recently identified as the Śāhi art of historical northwest India.

Despite my thesis that the foundation of the center in the Bāmiyān Valley and the most important period of artistic activity throughout the Hindu Kush coincided with Western Turkic power, and that the rulers may have been Turkic, it is not to be assumed that the art and culture of the Hindu Kush were Turkic. Indeed, the use of this ethnic term must not be taken too literally. As stated in chapter III, the confederation of Inner Asian peoples known as the Western Turks comprised different ethnic groups. As a result, the term Turk was used inconsistently by all our sources — Chinese, Arab, and Indian. Therefore, my usage follows the same flexible political connotation rather than the specific ethnic meaning.

We have repeatedly noted that the Turkic peoples adapted the prevalent culture that they encountered in the administrative, religious, and artistic spheres, just as did their predecessors, the Hephthalites and Kuṣāṇas. Indeed, the Turkic rulers appear to have legitimized their rule by adopting the visual vocabulary associated with the dynastic arts of the Kuṣāṇas, as well as by claiming direct descent from Kaniška, the greatest of the Kuṣāṇa rulers. The evidence for this pattern comes largely from the art associated with the Śāhi dynasties ruling in Kapiśa-Kabul and northern Pakistan. While the king of Bāmiyān was called Shēr rather than Śāhi, artistic features related their culture to the Śāhi of adjacent territories.

The artistic culture of the Hindu Kush can be identified with the formative phase of Śāhi art, which has its centers in Kapiśa-Kabul and northwest Pakistan from the seventh to the tenth centuries A.D. Descendants of the styles associated with the Śāhi extended eastward to Kashmir and to the Himalayas and are identifiable down to the eleventh century A.D.

In this study, I have identified a number of forms and practices that indicate a new phase in the development of Buddhism. This phase of Buddhism is characterized by the increased involvement of lay Buddhists and the association of the monastic order with the state. Tantric concepts also can be identified in both literature and art. While a tradition for these features existed earlier in Buddhism, 'this myth and imagery (only) achieved a form of actuality in the last stage of Buddhist developments.'¹

Historically, Buddhism in the borderland regions of historical northwest India had always formulated a creative response to the repeated invasions of foreign peoples and ideas. The development of esoteric concepts and themes (such as the maṇḍala) allowed for the assimilation and integration of these foreign elements into a new, more flexible system. It is not so paradoxical, therefore, that this monumental Buddhist complex should be created during the final phase of Buddhism in Afghanistan. In a sense, the historical, ethnic, and social dynamics of the pre-Islamic period impelled the creation of the new stylistic forms and iconography of the Hindu Kush. Thus, while the monumental concept of the complex in the Bāmiyān Valley was created at the beginning of the seventh century — it was not until the eighth century that the characteristic style of painting spread to the adjacent valleys. The majority of the paintings in the Bāmiyān Style dates to the eighth or perhaps ninth century. The Buddhist communities were then gradually reduced until their final demise at the end of the tenth century.

Temporally and geographically, the kingdom of Bāmiyān formed a watershed, dividing the old pre-Islamic from the newly forming Islamic cultures. Within the

¹ Snellgrove, 'The Notion of Divine Kingship in Tantric Buddhism,' p. 204.

high mountains, their narrow valleys guarded by impenetrable fortresses, the Hindu Kush served as a refuge for the Buddhists north and south of the mountains. While the Muslims were transforming the culture of the plains and plateaus, the mountain sanctuaries sheltered the Buddhist art and philosophy of the Lokottaravādin-Mahāsāṃghika. These ideas, combining with esoteric concepts from northwest India, travelled through the high mountain valleys between the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas. In the monasteries of the Himalayas, these traditions survive until this day as the completely articulated philosophy of Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The links that connect the Himalayan Buddhist culture of the present to their medieval past are provided by the literary and artistic monuments. One of the greatest of these to survive within the Indian cultural sphere is the monumental complex at Bāmiyān. But its legacy would be obscure, seen only through the mist of Islamic legends, were it not for Hsüan-tsang who preserved the Buddhists of Bāmiyān from eternal oblivion. It was his historic role to travel through the 'western countries' on the eve of the destruction of Buddhism in Afghanistan and to preserve for us the memory of a vanished people.

In following the courses of rivers and crossing the plains he encountered constant dangers. Compared with him Po-wang went but a little way, and the journey of Fa-hien was short indeed. In all the districts through which he journeyed he learnt thoroughly the dialects; he investigated throughout the deep secrets (of religion) and penetrated to the very source of the stream. Thus he was able to correct the books and transcend (the writers of) India. The texts being transcribed on palm leaves, he then returned to China.

In virtue of a royal mandate, he (Hiuen Tsiang) translated 657 works from the original Sanskrit (Fan). Having thoroughly examined the different manners of distant countries, the diverse customs of separate people, the various products of the soil and the class divisions of the people, the regions where the royal calendar is received and where the sounds of moral instruction have come, he has composed in twelve books the *Ta-t'ang-si-yu-ki*. Herein he has collected and written down the most secret principles of the religion of Buddha, couched in language plain and precise. It may be said, indeed, of him, that his works perish not.

(From 'Preface of Chang Yueh' in Hiuen Tsiang, *Si-yu-ki*, pp. 5-6).

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE BUDDHIST SITES OF THE HINDU KUSH

This chapter contains a description of the organization of the paintings within each architectural unit and when possible, suggests the original composition as well as attempts to identify the extant images.

The following description of the caves in the main façade at Bāmiyān proceeds from East to West. This parallels the original French (D.A.F.A.) system, although, as demonstrated, the pilgrims visited the complex from West to East. I have retained the D.A.F.A. designations, since the paintings have been known by these letters for decades. A collation between this system and the recently prepared Japanese system is included in Appendix I.

Cave G

Cave G (Fig. 55) complex is located at the extreme eastern end of the cliff under a massive rock fall. Cave F complex is immediately to the west. From Hsüan-tsang's description, to the east of this would have been the location of the giant Buddha in Mahāparinirvāṇa. At present, Cave G is inaccessible. The importance of Cave G derives from its being the only site at Bāmiyān where an excavation has been attempted. The conditions during this excavation by the D.A.F.A. were quite difficult and the work lasted only a few days in June of 1930. However, since the excavators unblocked a cave that had apparently never suffered any human destruction, they were able to recover some fragile objects (clay sculptures and manuscripts) of the type that had, in the course of time, disappeared from other caves that had been exposed. Although the details of the excavation are extremely vague¹, the excavators indicate that the materials recovered all belong to the same period; at least, only one date is given. Since Hackin detected no Iranian features in the cave and its decoration, he suggested that the cave predated Sasanian influence at Bāmiyān. He considered the cave architecturally prototypical for a certain series of caves at Bāmiyān and suggested a date in the third century. The manuscripts are published by Lévi, who calls them a library and attributes them to the third-fourth centuries (late Kuṣāṇa script) and the seventh-eighth centuries (late Gupta script)².

Cave G has a square plan with a dome resting directly on tiered squinches without a drum. This is the simplest architectural type found in the Bāmiyān caves. The remains of a stūpa occupied the center of the room. This is one of only two stūpas found inside the caves at Bāmiyān. The sanctuary measures 4 m. on each side; the stūpa measures, in circumference, 1.30 m. (Fig. 55)³. On each of the walls,

¹ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles Recherches Archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 32-38.

² Lévi, 'Note sur les manuscrits sanscrits provenant de Bāmiyān (Afghanistan), et de Gilgit (Cachemire),' pp. 1-13.

³ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 31-38.

other than that containing the door, was a large niche 75 cm. wide and about 2 m. high, which had held a sculpture of a Buddha standing on a lotus. To each side of the standing Buddha were sculptures of twelve seated Buddhas arranged in three rows. The figures were modelled and set against painted aureoles. The compositions were the same on each wall. Due to extensive deterioration, it is impossible to know if these three standing Buddha figures had distinctive attributes or identities. The stūpa in the center was too destroyed to recover any details, with the exception of a fragment of a painting of the Mahāparinirvāṇa painted in an extremely delicate style. An example of this style can still be seen in a fragment in the Kabul Museum; excavators have identified the figure on the fragment as Kāśyapa. It is interesting to note that the other stūpa found at Bāmiyān, in Cave J, was also in a cave complex containing a painted scene of the Mahāparinirvāṇa.

Several fragments of clay and wood sculptures were excavated from Cave G. The clay sculptures were covered with a thin layer of plaster and painted⁴. The fragmentary figures have fat-cheeked faces and almond-shaped eyes which are modelled expressively⁵.

Also found in Cave G were a unique series of small wooden fragments. The largest is the head of a Bodhisattva 7 cm high, preserved in the Musée Guimet (Fig. 56), 'on n'hésiterait pas à considérer, si la provenance n'en était nettement connue, comme une œuvre caractéristique du début de la dynastie des T'ang.'⁶ There were fragments of several other figures in the same style, which are now preserved in the Kabul Museum⁷. The excavators assumed that these had been used in the decoration of the cave. Perhaps, however, they belonged to a portable shrine or image carried by a pilgrim. No real stratigraphy was revealed at the cave.

The paintings that had originally decorated the dome (Fig. 57) were applied on a thin layer of plaster and deteriorated within hours after the cave was opened to the air. All that remains is a brightly colored copy executed by Carl during two hours of hasty work on June 16, 1930.

This copy reveals two particularly interesting features: the use of primary colors — red, blue, green, yellow, and orange — and the subtle integration of painted and modelled forms against the wall, which 'passe de l'une à l'autre par le moyen de transitions très habilement nuancées'⁸. This also appears to have been the case in Cave C.

Fragments of the central Buddha in the composition of the dome were recovered⁹. The Buddha and the lotus seat were treated in high relief; the stem of the lotus and the two side leaves, as well as the aureole, were modelled in low relief. The same type of aureole also surrounded the two seated Buddhas next to the central one. It is composed of a distinctive pattern: an olive-shaped form topped with a triple pearl. Although this aureole is characteristic of several caves at Bāmiyān (Caves I, C, Fa, and XI) and Fondukistān, it rarely appears elsewhere. It does appear

⁴ Rowland, *Ancient Art from Afghanistan: Treasures of the Kabul Museum*, Pls. 80, 84, 85.

⁵ Several authors have already noticed the Central Asian features of these objects. They can be compared to contemporary examples from Adžina Tepe in Central Asia, Akhnur in Kashmir, Tepe Sardār in Ghazni, and a little studied group of clay figures from Peshawar now in the British Museum. D. Barrett, 'Gandhāran Bronzes,' p. 362, would also date the statues to the seventh and eighth centuries. Yoshikawa Itsuji, 'Art of Bāmiyān,' p. 233, suggests the seventh century.

⁶ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 38.

⁷ Ibid., figs. 71 and 78.

⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

on two metal standing Buddhas from Shahri Bahlol, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the other in the Metropolitan Museum¹⁰.

The two seated Buddhas furthest from the center each sit under a Bodhi tree. They seem to execute variations of the dharmacakramudrā. (However, the figure on the extreme right is a bit difficult to distinguish.) The central figure is in dhyānamudrā. The Buddha to the far right also appears to have worn a crown composed of three blue discs¹¹. To the right of the central Buddha figure is Vajrapāṇi and to the left is a donor in Central Asian tunic offering a strand of pearls. At the apex of the drum, there were traces of a lotus.

The painting decorating the tiered squinches has a pearl border. The external faces of the voussoirs were decorated with multiple seated Buddha images with one shoulder bare; the internal faces of the voussoirs also contained seated Buddha images but both shoulders are covered. The ground of the painting was orange; the aureoles of the Buddhas were green.

From the preceding description, it would seem that a differentiation of the five Buddha figures on the dome was intended. The Bodhi trees of the central and two outside figures are different from each other. The figure to the right of center wears the edge of his shawl draped over his right shoulder. The other three have the right shoulder bare, while the central figure has both shoulders covered. The first Buddha to the right perhaps wore a crown. If the latter is the Buddha Maitreya, then the large central figure is Śākyamuni, and the other three are the previous Buddhas. This iconographic program, as reproduced by Carl, is not found elsewhere in the Hindu Kush. The colors also do not directly correspond to any other extant paintings, but the use of bright red and green is found in Caves M and S.

Cave G1

A group of caves was originally connected to G by internal stairs. A simple square room with a painted dome, designated Cave G1, is located to the west of G, high above the ground. The front is completely collapsed, exposing the paintings to the elements. This section of the cliff is so deteriorated that it is impossible to visit the cave. From the exposed parts of the cave, it appears that there was a long connecting complex, of which this square room forms a part. This complex has been sketched and appears in Kotera's book where it is designated as T,1-6¹². Cave G1 has a rather flat dome on which is painted an extremely faded maṇḍala-like composition. The large central figure in the composition, wearing a crown with floating streamers, dhoti, scarves and jewelry, is aligned on the north-south axis¹³. Around it is a circle of seated Buddha figures in monastic robes covering both shoulders. There are twelve Buddha figures extant of the original fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen¹⁴. The Buddha figures have longish but solid proportions; their heads are

¹⁰ Barrett, 'Gandhāran Bronzes,' pp. 361-365, discusses this oval and pearl decoration of the halo and aureole found at Bāmiyān in Caves I and G. (Only in Cave G is the aureole decorated in this way.) He considers this a late feature and dates the bronze figure from Shahri Bahlol, in which halo and aureole have this design, to the seventh and eighth centuries (he suggests the same date for Cave G). He did not note that this motif was also found in Cave C and at Fondukistān.

¹¹ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 34, n. 1.

¹² Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey*, 1969, p. 17, n. 20.

¹³ Ibid., p. 16, for a description of complex T.

¹⁴ Ibid., says there were probably fourteen figures.

slightly tilted. They are placed radially, with their heads facing toward the central figure. The maṇḍala in G1 is not mentioned by the D.A.F.A. Kotera has given the cave the designation T3 to indicate its possible relationship to the T series. However, since the location is in the region of G, I would prefer to call it G1. The central figure of the maṇḍala-like composition belongs typologically to a group of figures that includes the crowned figures in the center of the compositions in Caves K, H, and E at Bāmiyān, the cave at Kakrak and some compositions in C and E at Foladi. It is probably a maitreya figure.

Only the north and west walls remain of G1. On the west wall, parts of the upper half of two figures remain¹⁵. The figures are full, with fat, round faces and thin gold contour lines marking the edge of each white figure. They are attired in what I shall call the Bāmiyān Bodhisattva garments, consisting of a cape joined across the chest with arrow-head clasps, scarves, jewelry and usually (although not in the example being discussed) a crown. The painted figures are set against a bright blue background.

On the north wall, Kotera observed fragments of three painted figures. In 1971, I was not able to verify his observation. But, in 1969, he says he saw a central figure, wearing jewelry and the Bāmiyān Bodhisattva garments just described, including a crown. The left hand held a vajra and the right hand was in dharmacakramudrā. Although there is no attempt at chiaroscuro in the paintings on the north wall, the use of sharp black outlines for the figures makes them stand out sharply from the blue ground.

Cave T

To the west of G1 are the remains of a trapezoidal façade of a rectangular meeting hall. The cave is now open to the valley. Kotera has designated this complex as T. I shall keep this lettering here, although I believe this must have formed part of Hackin's original G complex. Kotera includes the preceding G, G1 and the present T together as T1-6.

A plan and cross section of the T complex are reproduced in Kotera (Fig. 58). Briefly, there is a dome covering a square sanctuary with eleven niches for statues recessed into the wall. A vestibule in front of the sanctuary has a complex trapezoidal roof and façade. The underside of the truncated arch façade, which resembles painted architectural forms seen in the 'Hunter King' from Kakrak and on the soffit of the niche of the West Buddha (55-meter Buddha), is divided into several panels by double engaged columns. This area was decorated with painted and moulded reliefs. At the back of the vestibule, underneath the arch, are the remains of a moulded mandorla and halo of a large central Buddha and one figure to each side.

Cave F

Further to the west of Cave T, about 80 meters from the 38-meter Buddha niche (Map 2) and 14 meters above the ground, is the three-unit complex called F (Fig. 59). Access to it is extremely difficult, owing to the collapse of the face of the rock. (This

¹⁵ Ibid., Pl. 62.

can be appreciated from the photograph illustrated in fig. 44 of M.D.A.F.A., Vol. III.)¹⁶ Room F2 has an octagonal plan with a dome and seven statue niches in the walls. Hackin calls this a chronologically transitional cave because it has an area of purely painted decoration (the dome) that he calls an early feature, and the moulded rinceaux decoration on the trefoil arch in the second zone (the drum) that he compares to Caves I and XI and which he considers a late decorative form¹⁷. Underneath these trefoil arches in the second zone were moulded mandorlas and halos for sculpted Buddhas¹⁸. The design on these mandorlas and halos is the same olive with triple pearl design as found in Cave G. All architectural decoration that has survived is in stucco. The sculptures are in high relief, so that they would have appeared to the visitor almost 'in the round.' Decorative forms are low relief stucco components formed by a mould and applied to the rock wall.

The next room, which has a rectangular plan, has no decoration. The next, Room F5, is a small room with a lantern roof, each beam covered with stylized, but freely drawn, figures of seated Buddhas. The rest of the paintings were not very visible in Hackin's time. However, today, thanks to the cleaning of the Archaeological Survey of India (hereafter, A.S.I.), we can discern a bit more of the damaged paintings. 'On the west wall are the remains of a seated Buddha with long slender fingers¹⁹. On the south wall, containing the entrance, is a painted counterpart of the pomegranate with ribbons found in stucco in *Cave I*'²⁰. Over the entrance to the corridor is a painting of the Mahāparinirvāṇa (Fig. 60). The painting measures 96 cm. long and 26 cm. high. The ground is blue with figures in red, black, and brown and with details in white and dark blue. The figure of Śākyamuni is mutilated. The couch, with a rondel textile pattern and wooden legs, such as is seen on the thrones in the niche of the 55-m. Buddha, is still clear. At the foot is a kneeling figure, probably Mahākāśyapa. At the head, a figure is seated upon a throne with a wide back comparable to the throne painted on the 55-meter niche. The white head of the figure, against a red halo, leans toward the Buddha. The left leg is raised, while the right leg is pendant, and the personage holds a white scarf. This may be Māyā, but the textual source for this representation of the Mahāparinirvāṇa is not yet identified. Underneath the couch sits a figure in a red monastic robe, the shawl over his head. He emits flames from his shoulders. There are five mourning figures behind the Buddha, all badly deteriorated. To one corner there appears to be the remains of a śāla tree painted in green. Other nirvāṇa scenes have been reported in G, J and K; but this one is the best preserved.

On the ceiling of the corridor, underneath the Mahāparinirvāṇa scene, is painted a large maṇḍala-like composition. The colors are now very dark, and most likely they were originally also somber. Now, the composition has a gray ground, the Buddha figures wear red robes and the details are in black. In the center of the composition is a seated Buddha with a monastic robe covering one shoulder. Around him are three concentric circles containing twelve, sixteen, and twenty-four Buddhas respectively. Each row is divided by a row of pearls. The Buddha figures are arranged radially, with their heads facing the center. This configuration is similar to G1, but differs from that at Kakrak, where the heads of the figures, also surrounding a Buddha figure, all point in the same direction.

¹⁶ Ibid., Pl. 7, for roofing structures.

¹⁷ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pl. 50, fig. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., Pls. 50, figs. 7, 43.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 49. Miyaji, 'La scène du Parinirvāṇa', and Idem, 'The Parinirvāṇa scenes'.

Cave Complex Surrounding the 38-meter Buddha

A great mass of debris, caused by a landslide, separates the caves I have thus far discussed from the caves which surround the 38-meter Buddha. These latter caves made it possible to circumambulate the colossal Buddha on various levels while simultaneously worshipping in these caves. Today, it is again possible to circumambulate the 38-meter (east) Buddha, for the conservation team of the A.S.I. has restored the original staircases, long since destroyed, which had connected cave complexes A to D. The entire group forms a functional unit and, although not all the caves were necessarily constructed at the same time, they were part of a single unified plan.

I have demonstrated that the pilgrims visited the site by starting at the west end of the complex. This movement from West to East, across the cliff's face, means that the pilgrims would begin the ritual circling of the colossal Śākyamuni Buddha by entering the staircase on the western side of the niche, visiting Cave Complex D first, then C, then walking around the top and head of the Buddha to the caves on the eastern side. After visiting A, they either descended to the base of the cliff, about 20 m. east of the Śākyamuni, or entered other caves further to the east through a connective system on the façade of the cliff.

At the base of the niche of the 38-meter Buddha, on the ground level, are carved eight caves (Fig. 90). These caves at the base of the niche are not connected to the system just discussed. They are the simplest caves at Bāmiyān, containing neither painting nor stucco architectural decoration. The roofing systems provide a vocabulary of forms for the types of roof which are developed in more complicated varieties throughout the site. Hackin considered these caves to be the earliest at Bāmiyān and the prototypes for all later architectural developments. These small chapels allowed one to circumambulate and worship at the foot of the Buddha image.

Cave Complex A

Since the original façade, staircases and porches have been destroyed, the network formed by the partially destroyed caves themselves is the only indication we have of the functional relationship of these units. Certainly, some of these caves, especially at the lower level, were also accessible from external staircases. The modern visitor begins the circling (*pradakṣiṇā*) of the 38-meter colossus about 20 meters to the east of the niche. Today, a path leads from this niche diagonally eastward up the face of the cliff, then turns back and joins the original staircase, which leads directly to the lower story of Complex A. Complex A consists of three rooms, designated by the D.A.F.A. archaeologists as A1 = vestibule; A2 = assembly hall; and A3 = cell (Fig. 61). The second story of this complex is reached by a staircase to the east of A3, which enters the vestibule connecting the five rooms of this floor (Fig. 62), designated thus: A.u.f. 1 = vestibule; A.u.f. 2 = sanctuary; A.u.f. 3 = chapel; A.u.f. 4 = cell; and A.u.f. 5 = cell (u.f. = upper floor). Many of these rooms, as others throughout the site, show evidence of originally having wooden doors.

Returning to the first story, the only extensive remains of painting are found in A2, the assembly hall, which is entered directly from the vestibule. The room is 4.90 m. long and 5.20 m. wide with a bench around the edge. The dome rests on tiered squinches, although, unlike G, the dome here has a drum. The architectural proportions and details seem awkward; the zone of transition is very wide

and not evenly excavated. No moulded decorations were used and the only statues were on the lower walls. Therefore, there was no 'illusionistic' interaction between moulded, sculpted, and painted surfaces. Due to the large amount of heavy soot that previously covered the paintings, the surface and details are completely eroded, so that the quality of line and finish of the paintings is almost impossible to determine.

Only two walls and the dome have been completely cleaned by the A.S.I., but probably the painted composition in the cave was symmetrical. There appear to have been paintings on three walls, the fourth wall having the door. The zone between the squinches is painted blue. In the center of each of these three zones is painted a large seated Buddha in red monastic dress, with both shoulders covered; they have simple blue aureoles with a white edge and white halos. (This coloring is the same for all the Buddha figures in this zone). The figures are frontal and hieratic and the bodies are rather square. On each side of the central Buddha are painted five smaller Buddhas, three above (the one closest to the squinch is smaller and squeezed in awkwardly) and two below this central Buddha. The surrounding figures have slightly longer body proportions than the central Buddha, although they still have a solid sense of mass. Apparently, each Buddha figure had a different *mudrā*. The heads are longer than that of the central Buddha, and the faces appear to have been shown in three-quarter profile. All details of the features have been eroded.

On the west wall is a unique Buddha image, uncovered only recently by the A.S.I. conservation efforts. Previously, this painting was buried under soot. The central Buddha on this wall is identical to the one on the north wall except that he has shoulder flames. The right hand is in *abhaya mudrā*; the left hand rests in his lap. Since only two of the four walls have been preserved, it is not possible to determine the total iconographic program of this cave.

The squinches are formed by five receding arches, each painted with a row of small seated Buddhas in *dhyānamudrā* with white halos on a blue ground. The intrados carries a chevron pattern. At the center of the squinches is painted a Buddha. All the smaller Buddhas, except for one Bodhisattva in the southwest corner, appear to emanate from these images painted at the center of the squinches.

From the scanty remains, the Bodhisattva in the southwest squinch appears now somewhat like a sketch, and it does not seem to resemble any other figure at Bāmiyān. He sits in *dhyānāsana* (it seems — but the soles of the feet are not visible); the knees and dhoti are so full that they resemble pillows. The broad-shouldered torso is slightly turned, and the hands rest in the lap. The single scarf falls across the chest almost like a cape. The 'secret navel'²¹ is deep-set and in the form of an 'x.' Next to the figure are stylized vegetal forms and perhaps a tree.

Over each squinch are painted two wreaths; there is a ball-like object to either side with flying streamers. This motif takes the place of the moulded emblems with flying streamers placed in analogous positions in other caves. All of the motifs in analogous positions are royal emblems deriving from crowns represented on coins, paintings, and silverware belonging to the greater Iranian cultural sphere.²² The royal donors painted on the 38-meter Buddha niche have these same emblems (pomegranate, globe between paired wings and crescent with globes) on their

²¹ This convention at Bāmiyān is most clearly represented here, but is characteristic of the period.

²² Z. Tarzi, 'Les Vases d'abondance de la Grotte I de Bāmiyān,' pp. 15-20. He establishes that the so-called vase is actually a pomegranate.

crowns.²³ At Bāmiyān, these royal emblemata with flying streamers are placed at the apex of arches (niche, squinch or moulded decorative arch) which contain images of the Buddha. (See, for example, the discussion below of two of these niches from Cave C and one from Cave I.)

The dome appears to have been covered with concentric circles of Buddhas. The conception of the composition would have been similar to either the painted dome at Kakrak or the rows of Buddhas adorning the beams of the lantern roof in Cave F. In the latter case, the theme of the 'Thousand Buddhas' was simply adapted to fit the architectural space.

Originally, the walls in the first zone — that is, the ground level — were also painted. On the west wall, a small kneeling figure of a donor in a wide tunic with wide lapels can be discerned. On either side of his shoulders were small white boxes; which perhaps were meant to contain the names of donors. In the north wall in the corners of the intrados is another kneeling figure of a donor, also wearing a long tunic. There is also a small empty box near his head.

The architecturally most interesting cave of the second story of complex A is Room 3 (Fig. 62). This octagonal room has an elaboration of the lantern roof type.²⁴

Cave Complex B

Complex B is reached via a staircase from the vestibule of A, where one enters the large vestibule of B from the east (Fig. 63). According to the D.A.F.A.,²⁵ Complex B is identified: B2 = the meeting hall; B3 = cell; B4 = vestibule; B5 = sanctuary; and B6 = cell. The most interesting in this group is B5 (Fig. 64), which Hackin describes thus:

Cette petite chapelle, le couloir qui la dessert et le vestibule qui l'éclaire par une vaste baie trilobée forment d'ailleurs une jolie composition déparée seulement par un horrible plafond (Pl. XXXIVa) compliqué à plaisir, et qui n'a d'autre intérêt que son étrangeté.²⁶

Cave B5 is a tour de force of the excavator's craft. In Hackin's time, the ceiling was covered with soot. Due to the efforts of the A.S.I. conservators, we can now discern the very scanty remains of the paintings that once decorated the cave. The paintings appear to have been predominantly in a brilliant vermilion, with details drawn in a fine calligraphic black line; touches of gold are also seen. In the south-west corner is a fragmentary composition consisting of a central Buddha in frontal position, with a Buddha figure on either side leaning toward him. There are also fragments of an architectural frame painted behind the Buddhas. Delicate geometric and floral designs are drawn on the truncated arch.

To the west of B6, one rejoins the original staircase that circles the colossal Buddha. Climbing a few steps, one enters the Complex B1, consisting of a vestibule, two sanctuaries and a cell. The larger of the two sanctuaries has a square plan with

²³ These royal symbols are discussed in Chapter VII.

²⁴ A discussion of the architecture can be found in André Godard et al., *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, pp. 43-44; Tarzi, *L'Architecture et le Décor rupestre des grottes de Bāmiyān*, p. 17.

²⁵ Godard et al., *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, pp. 46-47.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 46, 48.

a dome. Instead of squinches, there is a large niche in each corner, originally containing one seated figure (Buddha) and two standing figures which were either Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. On the top of each niche there was a relief moulding imitating a trumpet squinch. There are eleven niches cut into the wall, which also contained a seated Buddha and two standing attendants (Buddhas or Bodhisattvas).

Again, one rejoins the staircase at the western end of the staircase, which continues to mount along the length of the colossal Buddha statues. There are windows cut into the passageway at convenient intervals, allowing the visitor to admire the statue and the surrounding paintings. At the head of the statue, we reach a gallery which cuts around the back of the niche to the other side of the colossal image: the first exit to the right leads to Cave Complex C.

Cave Complex C

This consists of six rooms (Fig. 65), two of which are round. There are three principal rooms: the smallest, C2, is termed an assembly hall by Hackin; and the larger, C4, a sanctuary. The vestibules preceding these rooms, C1 and C3, are now completely open to the valley. To the east and west are incomplete excavations, as can be seen on the plan.

The unfinished state of the excavations corroborates Hackin's theory that the paintings of the vestibule C3 are unfinished. Rowland was under the impression that this was not the case:

[...] this fresh and sketchy technique is one that is known in many examples at Haḍḍa and doubtless represents the style that found favour in the religious establishments throughout ancient Gandhāra.²⁷

Since the recent cleaning of the paintings, there is no doubt that these are in fact undersketches, where only the first two stages of the three-stage technique of painting used at Bāmiyān have been completed (this technique is discussed in Chapter VI). All the forms are outlined in ochre, as is the case in almost all the underdrawings at Bāmiyān. The Haḍḍa paintings to which Rowland referred²⁸ were all outlined in sharply defined black. Although the Haḍḍa paintings do appear more 'sketchy' than the full-color compositions found, for instance, in C2, they are clearly completed images having different colors and clear outlines to delineate parts. This is not the case in C3, where only shaded outlines of ochre are used, and the forms are filled with large areas of a single color base (usually ochre, but also white, and occasionally with yellow and brown; there might also once have been green). In the C3 images, there are no details or attempts at volume.

The unfinished condition of these paintings offers us the best opportunity at Bāmiyān to study the painting technique of the Hindu Kush. In this group, the undersketches appear to be free-hand without the use of pounces. It was common practice, in both wall and manuscript painting, to use pounces as an expedient method of reproducing images.

The majority of the remains of the paintings are on the inside wall of the alcove preceding the entrance to sanctuary C4. To the west of the entrance, on the north wall, the composition consists of the now-familiar theme of five Buddhas, each

²⁷ Rowland, 'The Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān,' p. 31.

²⁸ The paintings are in the Musée Guimet; a good example is No. 21810.

under a tree. Here, however, the Buddhas are standing, and between them are depicted four typologically similar stūpas, each with distinctive details. The Buddha figures are long and slender, their bodies and heads turned to the stūpa next to them. They stand on lotus petals and are surrounded by a halo and mandorla. The lack of clearly delineating lines which would have completed the picture makes it impossible to differentiate the details of dress. One curious feature, however, is that the Buddha closest to the northwest corner, the one next to the stūpa with elephants (Fig. 66), appears to have a collar on his robe. The lower part of this wall seems to have originally contained three more standing Buddhas turning toward three stūpas typologically similar to the four above. These Buddhas do not have trees above their halos.

The incomplete nature of the stūpas, particularly their lower portions, makes a precise comparison somewhat uncertain. However, these stūpas relate typologically to the numerous other stūpas depicted in the paintings of the Hindu Kush (Bāmiyān D, H, I; Kakrak; and Folādi). The example from Niche 'i' is the clearest and most complete. In comparison to these examples, however, the stūpa in the upper part of the northeast corner (Fig. 66) is unique. Two addorsed elephants are depicted at the base. Above them are two lotus flowers, with perhaps a third in the center; the latter could, however, also be bells attached to the stūpa.

Adjacent to this composition on the west wall is painted a large standing Buddha under a Bodhi tree. To his left (northwest corner) is the fifth standing Buddha of the composition just described (north wall), facing the stūpa with the elephants. Little remains of the large Buddha, which originally covered the height of the west wall. The right hand was held higher than the left, which was also held at chest height. Thus, the mudrā was likely dharmacakra, although the right hand could also have been in abhaya. The tripartite leaf springing from the top of the halo can be understood as a Bodhi tree. It is similar to the Bodhi tree painted on the walls of the 55-meter niche. On the finished composition the three stems are distinctly painted like branches.

To the west of the sanctuary's entrance door are the remains of a painted stūpa which covered the entire vertical surface of the wall, 2.51 meters. The stūpa is now very ruined. Kotera has reconstructed it (Fig. 75) so that there are two men standing on the dome. I could not verify this from the present remains.

In the tympanum above the entrance next to this stūpa is an interesting, also much ruined, composition. In the center is a standing Buddha; a Bodhisattva stands on either side. To the east is a monk turning to his left, addressing a donor who appears to wear a Central Asian style tunic. There may have been ribbons floating from the head.

In the soffit of the doorway just mentioned (entering Sanctuary C4) is a row of seated Buddhas in padmāsana and different mudrās. They wear red monastic robes covering both shoulders. The flesh of the figures is ochre; the background is white. The delicacy of the sketching is particularly clear in these figures.

The sanctuary is a round, domed room, approximately 6.80 m. in diameter. The wall of the room has a deep statue-niche opposite the entry, and niches to each side of the entry (Fig. 65). Between each of these niches are three smaller ones, making a total of three large niches intended for Buddha sculptures, and nine smaller niches for statues. In the drum zone are more moulded statues. At the top of the dome is a painted lotus.

Under this painted lotus are found the remains of the composition of the standing Buddhas (Fig. 27). There are extant fragments of seven painted Buddhas, two of them extant to the neck. Since cleaning, the brilliant red of the background and the bright blue of the mandorlas behind the brown monastic robes form a strong

and dramatic pattern. The intensity of the colors seems to have been achieved by multiple layers of paint. This is in contrast to the thin layer of paint which appears to have been used in Cave A. The complex and flowing lines of the drapery, as well as the outlining of the fleshy palms and fingers, can now be clearly appreciated. The exaggeration of these anatomical features is accomplished by strong outlines in burnt-sienna paint. The same stylistic feature is encountered throughout Folādi, where the effect is even more exaggerated, due to the use of white outlining against a black body. It is also at Folādi that we find the other examples of the standing Buddha composition (Fig. 25). At Folādi, the seven standing Buddhas decorate a small dome; their heads are intact, while the bottoms of the figures are missing.

In Cave C4 the feet of the Buddhas can be seen to rest on lotus petals. The red ground is strewn with wreaths and miscellaneous flowers edged in flying streamers, creating the 'horror vacui' effect. The columns which form the architectural backdrop for the Buddhas, rest on round jar-like bases, the mandorlas overlapping them unevenly.

The so-called assembly hall, C2, is a round, domed room about 5 m. in diameter, divided vertically into three zones. Facing the entrance in the first and lowest zone is a deep niche 1.5 m. wide, originally meant to hold three figures. A group consisting of a Buddha with two attendants is common at Bāmiyān, but we don't know if the attendants were Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Immediately above the niche are painted genies carrying crowns, one of the crowns is visible.²⁹

This theme of a Buddha symbolically crowned with a royal emblem is echoed in the composition decorating the dome. In this composition, each of the central Buddhas in each of the ten niches is crowned by an umbrella surmounting the halo (Fig. 30). Some of the peculiarities of this umbrella can be explained as the result of an attempt to recreate in a two-dimensional medium a form which was more usually found in sculpture. A sculptural example of this type of umbrella survives, crowning a bronze stūpa in the Peshawar Museum. Comparing the latter to the painted depiction, we can identify the white hemisphere as the umbrella, and the four forms underneath (in red, black, blue, and yellow) as the four tassels. The streamers, which fly out to each side in the C2 painting, are placed on top of the bronze stūpa. The bronze streamers are underneath a single crescent with a cintāmaṇi in the center.³⁰ The umbrella in C2 is topped with three crescents, each with a pearl in the center. These resemble the triple-crescent crown seen in the niche of the 55-meter Buddha.

Directly above this, crowning the moulded arches which frame the niches, is a variant of the royal emblem discussed in the section on Cave A. Here, in C2, moulded in low relief, are a pair of wings, a globe-like shape in the center and flying streamers. The niches rest on double columns. The ensemble is an intricate blend of moulded relief forms, sculpture (three figures in each niche — Buddha and two attendants) and paint covering the background of the images as well as decorating the moulded forms. The same profusion of floral designs as described in C4 is painted as decorative fill in C2. Perhaps, at the summit of the dome, were more painted or moulded figures framed by the triple pearl and olive-decorated mandorla. The sketch (Fig. 45) demonstrates the relationship of these themes.³¹

²⁹ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles Recherches Archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 7, fig. 7.

³⁰ A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 15. The crescent containing a ball also represents the sun and moon.

³¹ This is a reconstruction of only one of the blind niches that originally formed part of a maṇḍala-like pattern in the dome.

The decoration of the assembly hall, in the middle zone, appears to have consisted of a series of sculptural units each organized into a 'triad,' similar to the system found in the other two zones. Between two of the mandorlas are found fragments of two kneeling donors. One appears to be a monk in a red gown; the other wears a white Central Asian style tunic, and is located above the genie crowning the Buddha. Another interesting feature of this cave is the appearance of a painted *kīrttimukha*, the stucco modelled equivalent of which is found in Caves I, II, XI, and D. As previously stated, Hackin considered the use of moulded decoration to have chronologically succeeded that of painted decoration, while Tarzi has the opposite opinion.

Cave Complex D

The main staircase from Cave Complex C descends one flight to another complex of three rooms with vestibules. This complex is known as D. In this group, only the central octagonal room and vestibule are of interest to us, as this sanctuary with vestibule has been considered crucial for the dating of Bāmiyān. Rowland took the paintings of the ceiling of the vestibule as the key point in his chronological scheme for the entire complex around the 38-meter Buddha. Tarzi considered the architecture of the sanctuary equally critical for his study. Since we are not concerned here with architectural problems, the reader is referred to these studies.³²

The vestibule D1 (Fig. 70) is the only extant example where enough of the façade remains for the original appearance to be reconstructed. As mentioned earlier, it can be presumed that most of the complexes had decorated façades. The newly cleaned and restored façade can best be studied from the foot of the cliff. The ends of the false beams, carved from the rock, are topped by a row of moulded trilobe arches each containing a painted image of a seated Buddha. The ceiling of the vestibule was originally covered with a profusion of painted motifs (Fig. 68). The false beams were decorated with floral, geometric, and abstract patterns. Between the beam ends were separate rows of medallions. Four pairs are extant, and each contained (from east to west) pairs of boars' heads; winged horses; single birds (perhaps peacocks), each with a strand of pearls in its mouth; and addorsed birds (perhaps pigeons), each holding pearls in its beak. This is the only instance in the painting of the Hindu Kush of a decorative scheme consisting solely of figurative forms not iconographically associated with Buddhist art. Of these heraldic emblems, the only one to appear elsewhere is the boar's head motif which is found as a textile pattern decorating the tunic of one of the donors on the 38-meter niche painting. These medallion paintings are very sketchy and the animals depicted are highly stylized. The animals' bodies are divided into arbitrary sections and these anatomical units are then covered with flat areas of color. Unfortunately, the famous example of one of these motifs in the Kabul Museum (the addorsed birds)³³ is considerably restored. The style and technique can be better understood in the photographs taken in situ after the recent cleaning. These paintings have not been restored (Fig. 67).

³² J. Hackin and R. Hackin, *Le Site archéologique de Bāmiyān: Guide du visiteur*, pp. 26-29; Godard et al., *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, p. 48; Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 8-11; Tarzi, *L'Architecture*, pp. 26-37. Tarzi includes the information from the earlier publications plus his own description.

³³ Rowland, *Ancient Art from Afghanistan*, color Pl., p. 93. Compare with a sketch of the original, Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 9, fig. 1.

The painted compositions on the walls of this vestibule are iconographically similar to the vestibule in C. The color scheme of the walls is quite different from the ceiling. It consists of somber earth colors against a blue background. The gowns of the Buddhas are gray-brown. Only fragments of the top of the wall compositions remain. On the north wall, the top row consists of five seated Buddhas interspersed with three identical stūpas (Fig. 69). In the middle of this composition is the door to the sanctuary D2. Underneath the five Buddhas, on either side of the door, are remains of two large standing Buddhas with smaller Buddhas filling the empty spaces on the wall. The east and west walls are painted with compositions similar to that of the north wall. Although the paintings are fragmentary, the fact that they had originally been finished compositions makes them more useful in reconstructing the stūpa type in the Hindu Kush than the incomplete sketches in C. This type is similar to a stūpa at Folādi, Cave E.

The octagonal sanctuary is visually divided by the decoration into three visual zones. The complexity of the architecture can be appreciated in Fig. 70 (cross section). Here, we can see the first zone, with its eight statue niches, each originally containing a seated Buddha sculpture. The second zone has niches for sixteen Buddhas, and the ceiling has a recessed, cross-beam roof with five domes (Fig. 71). The ceiling was further embellished at the ends of the false beams with stucco masks of kīrttimukha and heads of bearded men with conical caps (*M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol. II, Pl. XII). The moulded decoration of the ceiling is also found in Cave XI, which is in the vicinity of the 55-meter Buddha. Hackin considered the architectural decoration in this cave to be an advanced form of the interaction of the three techniques already experimented with in C4 — painting, sculpture and decorative mouldings³⁴. One of the decorative bands is quite interesting, as it seems to be the moulded counterpart of a painted decoration seen in Cave K (*M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol. III, fig. 11). Here, moulded pearl rondels containing small seated Buddhas are connected to each other by a double-knot design. This series of motifs was frequently misunderstood as suggesting Sasanian patronage³⁵.

Rowland's description of these motifs as 'pure Mazdaean symbols'³⁶ is inappropriate in the context of Cave D. These motifs are important because of their typological uniqueness within the art of the Hindu Kush. Cave D is the most striking example in Bāmiyān of themes deriving from Iranian, Indian, and Central Asian art coexisting in one architectural unit³⁷. This type of ceiling decoration is found earlier at Ajaṇṭā³⁸. The presence of Iranian emblemata, such as the boar's head, in a decorative pattern that may have derived from an Indian Buddhist cave site is also noteworthy.

Just below this complex is another designated by the D.A.F.A. as D1 (Fig. 72). This complex has no paintings extant, but is quite important for a study of the architecture of Bāmiyān³⁹. Briefly, the sanctuary has an octagonal plan covered by a dome. Again, the decoration is divided into three vertical zones. Each of six of

³⁴ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 77-78.

³⁵ B. Rowland, *The Art of Central Asia*, p. 95.

³⁶ Ibid., see description of color plate.

³⁷ Tarzi, *L'Architecture*, pp. 87, 101, for the Central Asian aspects of the architecture.

³⁸ On the ceiling of the Vestibule D the composition of the painting reinforces the architectural parts of the false stone beams of the porch. The paintings on the ceilings of the Ajaṇṭā caves I and II (M. Singh, *The Cave Paintings of Ajaṇṭā*, pp. 74-75) also used a juxtaposition of figurative and nonfigurative motifs to create the impression of a beamed ceiling.

³⁹ Tarzi, *L'Architecture*, pp. 31-32, 84.

the walls of the octagon is occupied in the first zone by a large sculpture niche; on either side of the door is a smaller niche. In the drum zone, the second zone of decoration, are niches for seven Buddhas. Above this is the third zone, edging the cupola, with a frieze of niches of different forms and dimensions to hold eighteen Buddha figures. The cupola is covered with soot.

From the vestibule, the pilgrim would have taken the staircase running along the western side of the 38-meter Buddha to descend to the base of the niche of the statue.

The circling of the Buddha now complete, I shall describe the paintings which remain in the niche of the Śākyamuni Buddha statue.

The Niche of the 38-meter Buddha (East Great Buddha)

The niche surrounding the 38-meter Buddha is about 8 meters deep. It is in the form of a simple arch, the shape being somewhat uneven, due to the intrusion of some above-mentioned caves. The entire niche was originally covered with a thin coating of plaster and a painted decoration filled the entire surface. Exposure to the elements and human destruction have eroded all but the composition on the soffit and a few patches on the upper parts of the walls. While the technique of painting appears to be the same here as elsewhere at Bāmiyān (as discussed in Chapter VI), the quality of paint, or the number of final layers, appears different. The paintings are completely worn down, so that both the red underdrawing and the charcoal gray outlining are noticeable everywhere. The present surface is flaky and uneven and the colors are faded. One could attribute this to exposure, except that the paintings in the other open niches retain a more even surface and truer colors. The eroded condition makes it difficult to compare certain stylistic features (such as drapery on the Buddha figures) with the better preserved paintings of the other niches. However, the scaffolding (erected by the A.S.I. for their preservation efforts) allowed close study of details not previously possible, so that many details of the iconography became clearer.

The center of the composition on the soffit is located directly over the head of the colossal image of the Śākyamuni Buddha (Figs. 50, 51). In the center is the standing figure of a male deity in a long tunic and cape. His head faces south and his feet point north. The intended vantage point of the image apparently was the ground at the base of the Buddha. From this point of view, there is almost no distortion.

The painted composition is divided into five parts; of which two parts are symmetrical, thus three zones of decoration. The large central panel occupies the entire soffit of the niche and is aligned on a south-north axis. To each side of this panel, at the shoulder of the niche and level with the head of the statue, is a long panel whose figures are oriented east-west. The walls of the niches underneath the bay windows, which open onto shallow stone platforms, were each originally covered with paint. It is impossible to tell if the compositions were symmetrical, because only one small fragment is left on the east wall. The back of the niche above the shoulders of the Buddha was also painted, but little remains today.

The central panel of the soffit has received the most critical study, while the side panels, specifically the crowns worn by some of the figures in the panels, have been used to date the complete ensemble which surrounds and includes the 38-meter Buddha. The entire composition of the vault, all of which is in the same style and technique and obviously painted at the same time, has never been analysed as a unit together with the central cult object, the Śākyamuni Buddha. From a

description of the niches and caves at Bāmiyān and at Fondukistān, it can be seen that each architectural unit was conceived as displaying a unified and coherent iconographic program. I therefore feel that this unit, the 38-meter Buddha and niche, should also be studied from the same perspective. (A partial explanation for the iconography is proposed in Chapter VIII).

The background of the composition in the central panel is painted sky-blue, and is ringed with fiery clouds. Along the top and on the sides are flying geese (*hamsa*). There are four red balls at the corners. The deity rides in a golden chariot pulled by four white winged horses and driven by a standing charioteer. Standing in the chariot are two haloed figures — with wings — who may be female. The figure to the east wears a plumed helmet and carries a large yellow shield on which is drawn a face in profile. The figure to the west appears to be dressed in identical fashion, but the head and other details are abraded. The latter figure is poised as if to throw the long spear she is holding. Above each of these figures is a mythical figure, half male half bird (*kinnara*) that is painted yellow. The upper half is clothed in jewels similar to those of the female figures. The *kinnaras* wear helmets with ribbons and are bearded. The figure to the right carries a long spear in his right hand and a large torch in his left hand. Above the *kinnaras* are the busts of two figures, one in each corner, holding scarfs above their heads. Perhaps meant to symbolize the wind. The halo surrounding the central figure is so faded that it has permitted several interpretations. The entire disc is surrounded by a red saw-toothed frame inside which is a plain white band and inside that is another band forming a crescent. The lower part of the disc appears to be filled with blue, as if the deity's cape is flying in the wind. The deity wears a white tunic with blue borders surrounded by pearls. He wears necklaces and bracelets, but no earrings. His crown appears to have been composed of three globe or leaf-shaped parts. Broad, flat, white ribbons float from his shoulders. In his right hand he holds a striped spear; the left rests on the pearl handle of his sword.

The side panels are located over the bay of the ambulatory, which passes around the head of the Buddha (Fig. 4). The frame of this composition, as in many Gandhāran sculptures, is an architectural device; in this case, a balcony with embroidered rugs hanging over it. On each side are eleven figures behind the balcony, and three seated Buddhas, with mandorlas and halos, in front of the balcony. Two of the crowned Buddha figures (C.B. 1E and C.B. 2W) wear fan-shaped crowns with floating ribbons. Golden crescents spring from their shoulders; a three-pointed cape and double necklaces cover their monastic gowns. They each hold a white scarf and sit on a lotus with down-turned petals. The other two crowned Buddha figures (C.B. 2E and C.B. 2W) are almost identical to these except for the shape of the crowns and that they each hold a bowl with streamers in the left hand. Their right hands appear to be in *vitarkamudrā*. The central Buddha figures on each side (B. 1E and B. 1W) are very faded. They sit on thrones in *padmāsana* and execute a variant of the *dharmacakramudrā*. Their brown monastic gowns leave the right shoulder bare.

The other figures in the two side panels are royal personages represented as busts behind the balconies in three-quarter view. The only figure who is not a royal personage and who is not represented in three-quarter view is a donor figure in the east side panel (D. 1E). This figure is shown as a bearded monk in profile, with a *stūpa* in his left hand and offering a bowl-shaped object to the crowned Buddha.

All the other figures in the panels are also giving offerings to the nearest Buddha. These figures are typologically similar to each other, in that they all wear crowns, dress, and jewelry and have halos (except D. 7W). These motifs are found

on paintings, on coins and silver objects with representations of Sasanian or eastern Iranian royalty (D. 1E, D. 4E, and D. 3W) or Central Asian princely images (D. 3,5,6, and 7E; D. 1,2,4,5,6,7, and 8W). However, their meaning is not so clear as it may appear. At least with regard to the dress — these modes are both found in the art of Kizil. Also from the late seventh to early eighth centuries they occur in the art of northern Pakistan. Further, the halos on princely figures are also found in Kizil, where it does not imply divine status. Close study reveals that each personage is depicted with distinctive characteristics, no two being identical. Most of the faces are worn away. Of those that survive, the features seem so unique that they may have been intended as portraits. This is particularly noticeable when compared with the blandness of the standing personage's face in the center panel on the soffit. Note particularly the individuality of the beautiful queen with the Central Asian hair style and the long Indian cape (D. 3E)⁴⁰. Note also the mongol features of the male with the small moustache over thin bow-shaped lips (D. 5W) (Fig. 7).

Underneath these panels, between each bay and the back wall, is another donor in the attitude of prayer. On the east is a female figure; on the west, a male wearing animal skin boots. This is a fashion we shall see again in the 55-meter (west) Buddha paintings and at Fondukistān.

On the back wall of the niche were painted, in the upper register, three Buddhas: a large central Buddha, of which only a halo remains, and two Buddhas seated on thrones, one to each side. The color scheme is the same as the side panels, a blue background with figures depicted in earth tones. But here the Buddhas sit under trees and are considerably larger than the ones in the side panels. The contrast in size can be seen in the corner of the niche where, together, the two donors on the west wall (D. 1W and D. 9W) are not as large as the seated Buddha (west) on the north wall.

On the east side wall of the niche, nothing decipherable remains.

On the west wall, parts of three registers can be discerned. The first row from the top shows the bottom half of three figures in a row of donors. The embroidered Central Asian tunics of the donors are the typical dress of the laymen depicted at Bāmiyān, who are depicted frontally and with a splay-footed stance. These are the only standing donors in the painting of the Hindu Kush.

The central figure of this niche was the colossal statue of the Buddha identified by Hsüan-tsang as Śākyamuni. (See Chapter VI for a brief description of the visible remains of the statue.) The Buddha statue from the present ground level is 38-meter tall. The niche is 14/16 meters wide. In the lower half of the niche, windows are placed that open onto the internal staircase by which one circles the statue (performs the *pradakṣiṇā*).

⁴⁰ The female hair-style can be seen in paintings from Pyandžikent and in a simplified form at Samarra. Also found in the paintings from Pyandžikent are most of the costume details seen on the figures in the paintings of the 38-meter Buddha niche. The central deity on the soffit wears a long coat with embroidered border and a round neck; the donors in the side panels wear the same coat except with lapels. Both types of coat are seen in the paintings at Pyandžikent. An example of this mode in Indian art is a bronze statue of Sūrya, dated to the eighth century from Kashmir, now in the Cleveland Museum (P. Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, Pl. 17). It is believed that this image is a replica of the principal image in the temple at Martand built by Lalitāditya in the early eighth century (Ibid., p. 82). Another comparison for the costumes in the 38-meter Buddha niche are donor figures on a sculpture attributable to north Pakistan, ca. eighth century, the Sasanian-style man's dress and the long cape worn by the female donor. The shoulder medallions edged with pearls, as seen on two of the crowned Buddhas (C.B. 1E and C.B. 1W), decorate the garment of a female figure in the Pyandžikent painting.

Above the level of the shoulders of the statue, on either side, two long horizontal windows open onto the ambulatory, which goes around the head, horizontal to the ground, and connects with the staircases on either side. On the platforms, and extending across the sills of the windows, are troughs that end in holes in the walls of the niche. These were obviously meant for wooden beams, which could have secured part of the scaffolding for the painters, or else were part of the support for a narrow wooden balcony, which was constructed upon the rock platforms. Here the nobility may have been seated during ceremonies, similar to the frieze of noble donors behind a balcony depicted in the paintings above these platforms. The ambulatory, which allows access to these platforms, also allows access to the head of the Buddha from an opening in the north wall.

The 38-meter Buddha Sculpture

The 38-meter Buddha is frontal and hieratic in style with heavy proportions and a rather large head on a short neck. The total effect is stocky and static. The hair is curled in the Gandhāran mode. (See Chapter VI for more complete details.) From forehead to chin, the face has been cut to a vertical plane. Two thin lines can be seen on the neck in the style of the Gandhāran Buddhas. The drapery, consisting of three garments, covers the body with a profusion of finely moulded folds. The shawl appears to be gathered at the left shoulder and has been placed in a slightly curved line, high over the right shoulder. The lines of the shawl then sweep from the left shoulder over the right arm and form increasingly off-center 'u' shapes. The center of this outcurving 'u' is at the edge of the right hip and ends below the elbow. Another series of somewhat 'u'-shaped folds is formed by the movement of the shawl from the left arm across the right lower hip and leg. The centers of these 'u' shapes fall between the legs so that the legs are the only parts of the body clearly delineated. Thus, the long garment covers the entire body and forearms, and is arranged so that the folds fall separately into four directions: (1) at the upper left part of the chest above the left armpit, (2) to the right half of the chest below the right armpit, (3) further to the right above the right hip, and (4) the length between the legs. The drapery was constructed from lime plaster, the pleats give the appearance of fluting.

Cave S

The rock façade to the west of D is very damaged. If one climbs along the face of the cliff over the débris, one enters part of a long series of quite small rooms now almost completely destroyed. The Japanese team has designated this series as S (see Kotera). The first chamber to the west of this complex is completely destroyed on the north and west sides. The chamber was originally very small, perhaps serving as a cell for meditation. The chamber was covered with a lantern roof, and on the false beams traces of painting were discovered by the A.S.I. conservation team. This chamber was not published in the D.A.F.A. reports; and from the pictures in Kotera's publication taken before the cleaning, it would seem that the paintings at that time were hardly visible.

Thanks to the recent cleaning, we can see the original brilliant colors: vermilion red, white, and black on a dark blue ground. The most interesting figure is found to the west of the remaining beams. It is a seated Buddha in a bright red monastic

gown, with a red halo and mandorla (Fig. 33). He wears a high crown, the details of which are lost. This rectangular crown was set on a broad white band. On either side of the head were white rosettes from which float long, stiff, white streamers. Their stiff downward curved shape is also seen on crowns at Folādi. The manner of drawing of the face is similar to the faces of figures in F, except here the outlines of the features are in bright red, and the eyebrows are very arched. The small mouth and flat, fat cheeks are typical of Bāmiyān Buddhas. The other extant Buddhas in this frieze are not crowned, but are stylistically similar. Between the Buddhas were tall, white stūpas. Their top parts are missing, but the long red streamers remain, stiffly drawn in their downward curve to the bottoms of the stūpa bases.

Parts of two decorative forms remain. The eight-petalled flower in the border is treated in a highly stylized manner similar to the lotus seats in Kakrak and in Niches E and H. The flower is divided into arbitrary geometric parts, alternately painted in shaded red and white. The second decorative form consists of architectural patterns, both geometric and floral, which can be seen on the beams.

Cave M

There is an extant painted ensemble the Bāmiyān Valley which I could not visit. They were unknown until published by Kotera; but from the indications in his book I was not able to locate it. Thus, my discussion, references, and illustrations are all taken from his book⁴¹.

According to his indications, the complex is located east of the 38-meter Buddha and is called Cave M. As I could not find the cave here, I am inclined to believe he may have meant to the west.

The paintings in Cave M are very dark and difficult to decipher, and most of them have disappeared. The main composition is on the north wall opposite the entrance (Figs. 73, 74). It seems that the paintings here were in a shallow niche, in a position occupied by sculpture in the caves we have described earlier. At the center of the north wall is a Buddha seated on a triple lotus throne, which is painted in black, white, and blue⁴². On either side of the central Buddha, and perpendicular to him, are two other large Buddha figures.

Next to the Buddha on the east wall of the niche is painted a standing figure dressed like a warrior (Fig. 74). Above the central Buddha, and facing the outside of the niche, are two medallions, 20 cm. in diameter. According to the reconstruction, the more destroyed medallion shows a standing figure with geese behind a grillwork balustrade. (A similar composition can be found in K.) This figure is identified as a moon god. The other medallion is said to have a standing figure in the center with wings, helmet, and trident, and is flanked by two attendants seated on horses. These figures are also shown behind a balustrade and the central figure is identified as representing the sun god (Fig. 73).

On the south wall of Cave M the composition is mostly destroyed. The central Buddha figure is missing, but a figure on his left wears a crown with ribbons and the double cape with arrowhead clasps fashionable in the Bāmiyān paintings. His right index finger is raised⁴³. The ceiling is painted with a repetitive pattern of seated Buddhas.

⁴¹ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pls. 57-61.

⁴² Ibid., Pl. 60, figs. 1, and 2 for north wall.

⁴³ Ibid., Pl. 61, fig. 2.

Niche E

About 50 meters to the west of the 38-meter Buddha, and high above the ground, is located Niche E, which was apparently always meant to be completely open to the valley. This niche contains the remains of a statue of a seated Buddha and paintings surrounding and complementing this central sculptured figure. The complex to which this niche belongs contains fifteen units and is one of the largest architectural complexes at Bāmiyān. The only units still containing paintings, however, are the niche and a small room to the east of it⁴⁴.

The niche of the Buddha is 6.20 m. deep, 6.15 m. wide, and about 8 m. high. There is an ambulatory at the base of the seated Buddha (Fig. 76). Only the core of the statue, which was sculpted from the rock, remains. Holes for the wooden armatures can be seen.

The mandorla of the seated Buddha, painted on the north wall of the niche, is multicolored: brown, light blue, darker blue, yellow-orange, and violet. This palette is unique in Hindu Kush painting. Because of the subtle blend of colors and the dramatic style, the painting of the Bodhisattva Maitreya on the soffit has come to be known as the 'beau Bodhisattva.' This figure is indeed remarkable and although the details and composition can be related to the other paintings, the style of the Bodhisattva Maitreya is unusual. Nonetheless, it can be seen as an extreme development of the 'Bāmiyān style'. The painting, and particularly the central figure, have been discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI. I shall confine myself here to a brief description of the ensemble.

The geometric division of the space is the same as for all of the niches that are open to the valley. There is a sculpted figure at the back wall and in the center of the niche. This figure faces south toward the valley, and is the axis of the niche. Directly over his head, on the soffit of the niche, is a central panel containing a deity with the head facing toward the south and feet toward the north. The orientation of the figures in this central panel is always south-north. On each side of this central panel are two side panels whose figures are oriented west-east (Fig. 77).

The background of the central panel, which fills the soffit of the niche, is bright sky-blue. The lower part of the figure and part of the face are destroyed. The figure appears to sit with his legs crossed at the ankles. The right hand executes the vitarkamudrā; the left is lying in his lap. However, the left hand is missing, and it is impossible to tell if it once held a water bottle, which is the case for an analogous composition from Kakrak. The broad shoulders and slender arms are enveloped in a double scarf, the complex folds of which are drawn in geometric patterns. The Bodhisattva wears three distinct types of necklaces depicted with great care, as is all of the jewelry, particularly the ornate tripartite crown, of which only one part remains. The elaborate coiffure is threaded with strands of pearls. The crown scarves are relatively large and float stiffly upward from rosettes. The face is framed by a violet halo; the figure has no mandorla. Geometrically defined areas of flat, brilliant color distinguish the central panel. The contours and features are both drawn with a hard, wiry line; the features are first drawn in terracotta underneath, and then outlined in black. The inside of the eye is rimmed with blue, intensifying the expression of the slightly cross-eyed gaze.

This panel is framed by an architectural device of a pair of painted columns with stylized Corinthian capitals which support two balconies. The balconies each

⁴⁴ Godard et al., *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, fig. 17.

contain the bust of a monastic figure with long, spidery fingers addressing homage to the central figure. If, as proposed in chapter VII, this figure represents the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven, then the attendants may be identified as Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. See description of niche 'i' for further discussion. These columns bend strangely in the center. It would seem that this is an attempt to correct perspective. The composition is meant to be viewed from the center of the floor of the niche in front of the Buddha statue. When the painting is viewed from the center and directly below on the rock façade, the distortion is almost gone. The space between the central figure and the architecture is filled with stylized flowers and what appears to be vajras in a 'horror vacui' confusion. It is a little difficult to discern the original composition of this section of Niche E. My reading of the remaining number of figures is slightly different from Kotera's interpretation⁴⁵.

On either side of the central panel, and the four flanking panels, is a panel containing a seated Buddha, stūpa, and perhaps the remains of a standing Buddha (Fig. 80). Below this outer border-like band on the west wall, there remain three rows of seated Buddhas. Opposite this on the east wall, underneath the shoulder of the niche, there are three Buddhas seated in meditation with small Buddhas, stylized flowers and vajra-like forms scattered in the spaces between them. One of the small seated Buddhas has shoulder flames (see below the seated Buddha's left in Fig. 79). These figures are all drawn free-hand, with an elegant definition of detail. The result is that each of the Buddhas has its distinctive character, although depicted in the same style. Compare mode 1 (Fig. 80) and mode 2 (Fig. 79) to understand these two variations.

On the ground level, on either side of the sculptured and seated Buddhas, was painted a standing figure of a Buddha, now hardly visible. The composition in the ground area thus formed a trinity. One can discern in these standing Buddhas a graceful contraposto, the heads slightly tilted and the left hands raised.

To the east of Niche E, and accessible from it, is a chamber covered with a dome on squinches. The dome is completely covered with seated Buddha figures in red robes performing different mudrās. On the north wall between the squinches are painted six standing Buddhas. Five are dressed in monastic habit; the sixth wears a cape with straight edges over his monastic gown. Streamers float behind him. He holds an unidentifiable object in his left hand, to which streamers are attached.

Cave K

Cave Complex K has been an enigma for art historians ever since it was first published by Hackin with imprecise descriptions⁴⁶. No photographs of the caves had ever been published. Dr. Tarzi was the first to rediscover its location (Fig. 5).

⁴⁵ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, pp. 43-44. The pair of balconies containing devotees is also found at Nigār.

⁴⁶ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches archéologiques en Afghanistan (1933-1940)*, pp. 5-6 and figure B. Hackin gives a description of K and reproduces a sketch by Carl of a Bodhisattva figure. The watercolor version of this Bodhisattva has been published several times, see for example T. Rice, *Ancient Arts of Central Asia*, fig. 152.

Cave Complex K

This complex consists of six rooms, and is about 25 m. above the ground and approximately west of E. Access is across a deep chasm in the cliff. Only one of the rooms appears to have paintings. The chamber is vaulted⁴⁷. Three sculpture niches are carved into the walls; the largest in the north wall opposite the entrance, contains a seated Buddha. The painted composition of the ceiling of the vault appears to be oriented on the vertical axis of this Buddha niche. Thus, the relationship of the painted Maitreya to the sculpted Buddha image is similar to the central painted panel containing the 'beau Bodhisattva' in Niche E, which is painted on the vertical axis of the seated sculpted Buddha statue⁴⁸.

The composition of this room in K is divided into three panels running south-north; the central panel is painted over the center of the large Buddha niche. At either end of the central panel are two half-circles containing three seated Buddhas. In the three remaining circles, which are in the central panel, six seated Buddhas surround a central seated Buddha, making seven Buddhas in each circle⁴⁹. They face east-west. The Maitreya figure is painted on the ceiling in the first complete circle from the south wall, in front of the entrance (Fig. 5). His head faces south, as is the case with the central figures in the paintings on the soffits of all the external niches. The panels on either side of the Maitreya each contain five circles with seven Buddhas. In the panel to the west of the Maitreya, the Buddha's head points east; in the panel to the east, they point west. Hackin says that to the left of the entrance (presumably, this means on the west wall) is found a Mahāparinirvāṇa scene⁵⁰. Although the figure of the Buddha is very much destroyed, some mourning figures around him are tearing their hair and beating their breasts still visible. One tall thin figure wears a red Central Asian tunic. Above the reclining Buddha, to the left and the right, are circles containing what Hackin described as solar and lunar deities, each seated regally on chariots⁵¹. We shall see that in J two discs representing the sun and moon are also located above a representation of the Mahāparinirvāṇa⁵². I could not decipher the forms inside the discs, but they seemed closer to the type represented in J (see below) than those found in M (Figs. 73, 74).

The colors of the paintings in K are very faded, but the compositions seem to have been painted in red, brown, white, and black on a light blue ground. This is essentially the color scheme found at Kakrak, although the colors at the latter did not fade. Several other features relate to Kakrak, notably the composition of the tangent circles. Another feature similar to Kakrak is that the focus of the composition of K is a seated figure in Bodhisattva garments, crown, and jewels, holding a water bottle.

This figure in K has been identified as Maitreya (Fig. 5)⁵³. He wears a triple

⁴⁷ Hackin and Hackin, *Le Site archéologique*, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁸ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 5. Hackin's description says there are four circles and one half-circle painted in the center of the vault. One of the circles contains the Maitreya. He does not say that there are two other rows of circles.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The Mahāparinirvāṇa scene in F, located like J above the entrance door, rather than next to it as in K, did not seem to have the sun-and-moon motif associated with the scene, but the paintings are so dark and damaged that it is possible that the sun and moon also once existed in F.

⁵³ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 5.

crescent crown and a unique broad scalloped necklace. His right hand is in vitarka-mudrā, and his left hand holds a bottle by the neck. One significant characteristic is that the Maitreya sits on a high-backed throne covered with a textile. In this respect, the Maitreya is similar to the deity painted on the center of the soffit of Niche 'i'. This same throne type is also found on the soffit of the 55-meter Buddha niche, and is used by the 'Hunter King' at Kakrak.

It is difficult to discuss the style of the figures in K. I have only the central Maitreya as evidence at my disposal. However, this figure appears heavier and stiffer than the central figure at Kakrak. (For a discussion of the figure types in general, see Chapter III.)

In the conclusion to this description⁵⁴, Hackin notes that the dome type of the other rooms in this complex relates to J and comes chronologically after G and A.

Although the photographs I have do not clearly show such details as costume, drapery, and facial features, an elegant knot treatment of the painted rondels surrounding the Buddhas on the walls can be appreciated and related to the stucco depiction of this motif in D.

Cave Complex J

This complex consists of six units about 15 m. above the ground. It is very difficult and dangerous to reach. The first photographs to be published were in Kotera et al.⁵⁵ The paintings are very much ruined and I did not succeed in photographing as many as those already published.

The most important painted compositions were in Caves 2 and 4 of Hackin's numeration; in Cave 6 the ruins of a stūpa were found (the only other one at Bāmiyān is in G). Also, in Cave 6, manuscript fragments were collected which dated from ca. the fourth to eighth centuries⁵⁶.

Cave 2 is small and square, with shallow dome on a shallow pendentives. Hackin groups this form in his architectural category C. The dome is completely painted. At the center is a seated figure in Bodhisattva dress, ribbons floating from the crown. Hackin reports that he holds a vase, and identifies him as Maitreya⁵⁷. The outer circle is composed of nine standing Buddhas. Their aureoles are connected by ribbons; between the outer circle and the center is a decorative band of lotus petals. On the drum is a series of twenty-two Buddhas in three-quarter profile. The background of the composition on the drum is painted an intense blue. On the north side of the drum, opposite the door, is a representation of the Mahāparinirvāṇa⁵⁸. Above the Buddha to either side are discs with busts shown in chariots, which represent the sun and the moon. Each of the three walls (other than the southern wall containing the door) has similar compositions representing the familiar Bāmiyān theme of the three Buddhas (Fig. 81). The center one is largest and is seated under a Bodhi tree. Here, however, the standing Buddhas seem to turn away from the center Buddha to address the Buddhas on the adjacent wall. To the side of the entrance on the south wall is a standing figure of a Bodhisattva,

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁵⁵ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pls. 64-66.

⁵⁶ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, pp. 2-4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁸ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pl. 64, fig. 2.

in the dress that typifies Bodhisattva figures found at Bāmiyān. His right hand is in abhaya mudrā; the left perhaps in varada mudrā.

The most complete painted remains are on the north wall underneath the Mahāparinirvāṇa scene with sun and moon (which is placed above the painting of the seated Buddha). In Cave M, the sun and moon discs occupy the same position above the seated central Buddha of a Buddha triad. I cannot help wondering if in M, also, the space between the sun and moon symbols had been occupied by a Mahāparinirvāṇa scene.

On either side of the central seated Buddha in J was an attendant figure facing him. Hackin identifies the one with a fly-whisk as Vajrapāṇi⁵⁹. According to the reconstruction by Kotera (Fig. 81), the east wall had an attendant figure with a crown and a hand-held object and, to the left of the Buddha, a figure in monastic dress with a fly-whisk, who might be identified as Vajrapāṇi.

Cave 4 is a square room with a dome on tiered squinches (Fig. 83). As usual, the north wall contained the center of the painted composition. It had a tall niche for a standing figure. Hackin's description of the painting he saw in this niche is a bit confusing. He says that the niche was meant to receive a standing Buddha. 'La voûte de cette niche porte encore des traces de peinture: des couronnes bleues munies de longs rubans flottants, bleus, verts et rouges.'⁶⁰ From this description, it is clear that it was either a crowned Buddha (of which there are several examples at Bāmiyān) or a Bodhisattva. Presumably there were other details apparent to Hackin that led him to exclude the possibility that this statue was of a Bodhisattva instead of a crowned Buddha. On the east and west walls, the central figures of the composition were seated Buddhas; thus, the focus of the decorative composition of the entire cave is the triple Buddha scheme as in J2. On the east wall, two standing attendants, either Bodhisattvas or Buddhas, were still discernable.

Cave J6 (Kotera's Jb) contained the stūpa mentioned above. The room was large, square and domed. All around was a bench, which had originally been painted.

The only manuscripts found at Bāmiyān (or anywhere, thus far, in the Hindu Kush) were found in relation to the only two stūpas uncovered at Bāmiyān. The brief report by the D.A.F.A. of the excavation of G indicates that these fragments were found in the rubble of the decayed superstructure of the stūpa. The fragments of manuscripts in J also appear to have been found in the stūpa.

What was the function of these stūpas at Bāmiyān? In a discussion of the Tibetan mchod-rten Tucci notes that, in addition to its symbolic meaning, the stūpa came to take on various functions in later Buddhist periods. Developing from its original function as a repository for sacred relics, the stūpa could also be used 'particularly in western Tibet [...] as a repository for other sacred objects, books no longer required for use, damaged paintings or anything else which still possessed a sacred significance. In a later period the building of mchod-rten continued in Tibet for still other purposes. They might be used, for example, for keeping collections of sacred writings — as in the case of the stūpa at Gilgit, which provided Sir Aurel Stein, who was present at its demolition, with a rich harvest of manuscripts.'⁶¹

⁵⁹ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶¹ G. Tucci, *Transhimalaya*, p. 116. Associated with these manuscripts were ts'a ts'as, clay tablets stamped with dhāraṇīs. Tucci also notes that the study of numerous collections of these tablets has indicated connections that 'western Tibet and Tsang had with India and the adjoining countries, including Gilgit and Afghanistan, during the period of the Buddhist revival in Tibet [ninth-

Levi, in his study (discussed above in the section on Cave G), refers to the Bāmiyān manuscripts as having belonged to a library deposited in the cave.

Niche H

Niche H is located about halfway between the two colossal standing Buddhas. Having no façade, it is completely open to the valley and is the largest niche that contains a seated Buddha figure. The niche measures 3.75 m. from the entrance of the corridor next to the Buddha to the front of the niche (Fig. 76). It is 10.8 m. wide at the front, at which point it is 14 m. high. As with all the colossal statues at Bāmiyān, the core of the seated Buddha was carved out of the rock. Behind the statue was a corridor for the *pradakṣiṇā*, ritual circling, of the Buddha. To the west is a small cell and to the east was a staircase that allowed access to the niche. The lower part of the niche has a trapezoidal shape with a semicircular arch forming the upper lobe. The walls of the lower part of the niche are flat rather than curved as in a true trilobe niche.

The painted composition of this niche is extremely faded but not flaked. Upon inspection it appears that the composition was never finished yet there is no evidence to this effect. The eastern side is evenly faded which most likely is due to exposure. The composition originally seems to have been symmetrical. The painted composition is divided into five parts around the vertical axis of the sculpted seated Buddha. The direction of the figures is the same as in all the similar compositions described in the Descriptive Catalogue. The central panel consists of a single deity in Bodhisattva garments and jewels, similar to those in analogous positions in units E and K. Among the Bodhisattva images in this group there are significant differences in the iconography as well as style. The central panel is oriented with head south and feet north. The extremities of the figure are largely destroyed. He appears to sit with knees drawn up and ankles crossed. This posture also occurs with other figures e.g. on the soffit of the 55-meter Buddha, in particular on the side panels (Fig. 49). The crown is extremely eroded and does not photograph well, but it appears to be a triple crescent. There may be a globe in the crown's center. The example most similar to this crown is the one worn by the figure at the center of the dome at Kakrak. The colors of the painting appear to have been earth tones with shades of blue and gray. This palette was also used on the wall of the vestibule in D. All the figures in this niche are long and slender. The mandorla of the central deity is rather flat and wide at the top. (It will be noted that the deity in E had only a violet halo.) The right hand is in *vitarkamudrā*, and the left rests on the knee and is missing below the wrist.

The second panel occupies the inner face of the upper arch below the center and consists of six Buddhas, all in *padmāsana* and executing different *mudrās* (Fig. 84). There may have been trees above them. Their monastic gowns also are varied. A particularly interesting example is the first figure, first row. Here the right shoulder is not completely bare, but the outer shawl is draped loosely over it. According to Griswold, this manner of wearing the shawl is not found in India, but is very popular in China and Japan. It is particularly favored in the cave sites of Central Asia where perhaps it originated. Its appearance at Bāmiyān is particu-

tenth centuries]' (Ibid., p. 119). It is also interesting to note that the practice of using stūpas as repositories for books is peculiar to the area extending from Afghanistan to western Tibet via Kashmir (Lévi, 'Notes sur les Manuscrits,' pp. 1-13).

larly noteworthy. It does later become popular in Tibetan and Nepalese art. Griswold sees the origin of this style in a rarely used fashion found in Gandhāran art where the right arm emerges as from a sling. The later variant seen here is found only in the Hindu Kush (not India) and is therefore predated by examples from Yun kang (e.g., Cave 6), among others⁶².

In the third panel are three Buddhas, each sitting under a clearly differentiated tree. All the Buddhas are in padmāsana. Beneath the mandorlas are stūpas and stylized lotuses.

Panel four is underneath the shoulder of the niche. It consists of two medallions containing two persons each. Typologically, the figures follow the flying apsaras in the same position in the 55-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 12). In general the iconography is quite similar; the stylistic differences between the two figures were discussed in detail in Chapter VI. Kotera, as Hackin before him, calls these 'couples' and differentiates male and female figures. This description is questionable as they all appear to have the androgynous quality of deities depicted in medieval Buddhist art. The drawing here seems particularly fast and sketchy, and the entire composition is faded to muted earth tones with touches of red and blue.

The fifth panel is the most faded one in Niche H and the figures are hardly discernible. Visible on the west side of the niche is the standing figure of a Buddha. Kotera hypothesizes that there was another Buddha on the east wall. Given the popularity of the Buddhist triad in Bāmiyān and the appearance of this composition in the same position in E and I, this supposition is probably accurate.

In comparing Niche H to the 55-meter Buddha, we note that the basic arrangement of panels from the center downward and the directional orientation of the figures are the same. Compositionally, the addition of a second panel on the side of the upper niche makes the composition of the painting of Niche H more complex. This complexity is characteristic of the later compositions at Bāmiyān; the earliest configuration painted in a niche at Bāmiyān, the 38-meter Buddha niche, has the same formal organization but is simpler with only three panels.

Cave N

Cave N is located about halfway between I and H. The only room containing paintings is at the eastern extremity of a long complex of interconnecting rooms, the western end of which is a long, large, oblong room. It was probably an assembly hall.

The chamber with paintings is about two meters square and has a lantern roof. The entrance is on the west side, with a large window in the south wall to admit light. The painting is too ruined to determine if the north wall remained the focus of the composition, as in the other caves discussed, even though the entrance is here placed in the south wall, rather than — as is frequent in Bāmiyān — in the west wall; but there may have been a secondary entrance here also.

These paintings, although extremely fragmentary, are clearly unique at Bāmiyān, both from the point of view of quality and iconography. The drawing is free-hand and extremely delicate and elegant. Features such as the rippling drapery, characteristic of — for example — Phase IIb (see Chapter VI), are treated here with extraordinary refinement (Fig. 85). The colors are a brilliant vermilion against white

⁶² A. Griswold, 'Prolegomena to the study of the Buddha's dress', p. 121, *passim*.

and flesh tones. Black and gold highlights are used dramatically; there are also touches of blue and green. The paint has an almost varnish-like finish. This cave has not yet been cleaned or its pigments analysed, so we have no data to determine if the paint is different from that used in the other caves. The cave was apparently discovered by Kotera.

Since the paintings are so destroyed, one cannot say if they relate typologically to the compositions in Niches H and E, and Caves K, J, and M. The ceiling in N was covered with a repetition of Buddha figures. At the center of the lantern ceiling was a deity with smaller attendants in each corner. Here, however, the central figure appeared, in my opinion, to be a Buddha rather than a Bodhisattva type, but this is debatable. The alternation of the color of the Buddhas' mandorlas in the friezes on the beams seems to be totally decorative. One Buddha figure in the triangle-shaped recess of the lantern roof holds a pātra.

The north wall has very little extant painting. At the center was a large Buddha figure underneath a tree (Fig. 86). There were smaller Bodhisattvas on either side and seated Buddha figures to the west.

The best preserved paintings are on the east wall opposite the entrance. The large central figure is a seated Buddha under his tree. Bodhisattvas turn to him on either side. To the Buddha's left is another figure, equally large, with an elaborate headdress. The high-piled black coiffure is decorated with a gold triple crescent crown with pearl finials, which rests on a double strand of pearls (Fig. 100). This figure was probably a crowned Buddha figure. The sumptuous image is set against a brilliant red halo. Five monks are attending him, three to his right and two to his left. The color scheme for these figures is the same found on the other walls. The use of broad bands of red shading around different anatomical parts is unique however. This is the only composition in the painting of the Hindu Kush that contains what might have been narrative details. Here, the monks are placed one above the other to give the illusion of space⁶³. On the other side of the central Buddha figure is a curious image consisting of a red tree, inside of which appears a knot-like shape in which sits a figure in a red monastic gown. Kotera thinks this may be a tree spirit. Above this composition, and decorating the edge of the walls, is a row of seated Buddhas.

All that remains on the west wall are three heads of ascetics, one behind the other. The composition is too fragmentary to suggest an iconographic program.

In addition to the stylistic peculiarities discussed in Chapter VI, one notices certain distinctive features in the treatment of clothing in Cave N. The shawl of the Buddha figure on the east wall drops down unusually low on his chest⁶⁴. In this cave is also found the only example of the shawl worn like a sling around the right arm⁶⁵. We also find in Cave N painted examples of motifs found elsewhere at Bāmiyān in stucco. The rinceaux⁶⁶ and hamsa carrying scarves are found in Grotto I. It is indeed regrettable that more has not survived of these unique and beautiful paintings.

⁶³ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, pp. 50-51.

⁶⁴ The only comparisons I know in Afghanistan are a seated Buddha figure from Fondukistān, Niche C (Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, fig. 164), and one in modelled earth found at Shotorak. Neither example of the robe seems so extreme as that in N at Bāmiyān. Griswold considers this fashion a 'sinizing' trend, that is, 'the general Chinese tendency towards a looser draping of the garments' (Griswold, 'Prolegomena,' p. 119). He does not mention finding it in India.

⁶⁵ Griswold, 'Prolegomena,' p. 121, says this type is found occasionally in Gandhāra, but never in India. We do find it in Central Asia, however, as at Kizil in the Cave of Statues.

⁶⁶ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pl. 54.

Niche 'i'

This is the smallest of the niches opening onto the valley. It originally contained a seated statue. Niche 'i' is found in the area of the 55-meter Buddha, and is quite high above the ground. From the back of the statue to the front of the niche measures 4.25 m. The base of the statue at its widest measures 3.86 m.; the width in front of the statue and between the entrances to the ambulatory is 4.5 m. There are no adjoining rooms; access to the niche is from a staircase on the west (Fig. 76).

The organization of the paintings into panels around an axis formed by the seated Buddha is consistent with the organization of the paintings already described. In this case, however, the center panel is slightly displaced toward the west; so that, although the composition is symmetrical, the figures on the east and west are not identical in size.

The figures of the central panel are again oriented so that their heads face to the south and their feet are directed to the north. Here, however, there is not one, but seven or eight figures, one behind the other, in a south-north line (Fig. 3). Moving from the south, the figures are:

(1) A seated Buddha, surrounded by a mandorla of white, green, terracotta, and blue, against a blue ground. This is the basic color scheme of the entire niche. The Buddha has a red shawl over a green monastic robe and a tripartite crown with short streamers, but no jewelry. He makes a variant of the dharmacakramudrā and is tentatively identified as the Buddha Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven.

(2) A seated Buddha holding a pātra, wearing a three-pointed jewelled cape over a red gown with white shoulder effulgences. He wears a five-part crown with streamers and may be identified as the Buddha-to-be Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven.

(3) A Buddha in a monastic gown seated on a lotus, the right shoulder bare, and making dharmacakramudrā.

(4) A figure sitting on a high-backed throne inside a circular frame (as in K). There is no mandorla. The figure wears bracelets and a tripartite crown, with streamers set against a halo.

(5) A Buddha similar to that in 3, above.

(6) A seated Buddha, similar to figure number 2, above, except the design of the cape is different and both hands are in front of the chest, perhaps in dharmacakramudrā.

(7) Figure number 7 seems similar to figure number 1. Therefore, the eighth figure (if one existed) would probably have been similar to figure number 4.

Between each Buddha, on both sides, are identical heads of bearded monks represented in a style associated with arhats in China. If the identifications of Maitreya and Śākyamuni in the Tuṣita Heaven are correct, then these figures may represent (Fig. 3) Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda. The former is responsible for passing Śākyamuni's robe to Maitreya and therefore symbolizes the passing of the dharma from the former to the latter. These figures have been identified in a silk painting from Tun-huang representing the Buddha Maitreya in the Tuṣita Heaven. These figures seen together with the heavenly musicians in the balcony may be meant to symbolize the Tuṣita Heaven⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 12-13. Hackin calls this a ballet-concert. The theme and organization of the composition is quite similar to the frieze of musicians in the Thousand Buddha Caves, Kizil. Here too, the musicians have contrasting light

The two side panels each have eight figures (perpendicular to the central panel) oriented east-west and placed behind a balcony. These delicately drawn personages are playing instruments and dancing. It has been suggested that the use of light and dark skin tones indicated different ethnic types or different castes. This motif is a distinctive feature of this composition.

The third set of two panels, on either side of the painted balconies, contains three rows of four seated Buddhas in each panel. They are oriented east-west. Each figure is dressed in a red monastic gown, has a halo and a mandorla, and sits upon a lotus. Each Buddha is surrounded by a brown circle decorated with a rather careless drawing in white of a simplified floral frieze. The origin of this design may be the floral pattern which simulates carved wooden decoration, and is found on the arcades enclosing all the Bodhisattvas in the niche of the 55-meter Buddha. A simplified version of this pattern is found decorating the arcade of the panel in this niche. Over each brown circle is a tree; all the trees have the same pattern (Fig. 87). Between the circles are stylized lotus- and vajra-like designs (like those seen on the central panel, Niche E) and small seated Buddhas in mandorlas. The Buddhas here are alternately represented in frontal and three-quarter profile. This is the only instance at Bāmiyān where there is an attempt to indicate volume with the use of flesh-colored, shaded contours. The more common technique, has been the use of a broad, even band outlining anatomical parts.

There is a fourth panel outside the central panel; it is composed of frontally represented Buddhas, whose mandorlas are squeezed into trilobe niches. They appear to execute alternately dhyānamudrā and dharmacakramudrā. Between them, framed by trapezoidal arcades, are stūpas with long streamers. These stūpas are quite intricate and are carefully depicted. Typologically, they are closest to those in Vestibule D, but also can be related to Fōlādī⁶⁸.

Underneath the shoulder level of the carved Buddha image, another row of seated Buddhas is painted in the soffit (Fig. 3). They all sit in padmāsana, but their mudrās, the colors of their mandorlas and styles of their gowns vary. Those Buddhas whose habit covers both shoulders execute dhyānamudrā, while those with one shoulder bare execute dharmacakramudrā. The same stylized vajra forms mentioned earlier appear here.

Both of the side walls of the niche, at ground level, have a pair of standing Buddhas under a tree. The Buddhas turn slightly toward each other. They form a pentad, with the seated, sculpted Buddha in the center. The west wall is the better preserved of the side walls; and one can see that a profusion of Buddhas and flowers fill the available space around these standing Buddhas. To the south, on the west wall, is found a painting of a Bodhisattva carrying three flowers and wearing a high crown. This is the only complete extant representation of a standing Bodhisattva figure playing an iconographically secondary role. Although the striped dhoti is typical of the Bodhisattva dress in the Hindu Kush, the other accoutrements — such as the scarves and jewelry — are simpler than is usual. The crown is also different, being high and pointed.

and dark skins. See Akiyama Terukazu and Matsubara Saburo, *Arts of China II: Buddhist Cave Temples: New Researches*, Pl. 209, for an illustration of the frieze at Kizil. For the identification of Mahākāśyapa and Ananda see Sasaguchi, 'A dated painting from Tun Huang.'

⁶⁸ The shapes and identifications of the different stūpa types found at Bāmiyān are interesting questions. Although I cannot discuss them fully here, the most popular type in eastern Afghanistan is the 'descent from Heaven.' This type is also common as far east as Tibet in the seventh to ninth centuries.

This cave has the only ambulatory associated with an external niche in which the decoration has been preserved. A series of standing Buddhas is painted on the walls. Between them are the same stylized lotus- and vajra-like forms seen on the outside of the niche. Although the Buddhas are largely destroyed, one, painted in an unusual aubergine color, shows the Bāmiyān artist's remarkable dexterity and control of complex drapery patterns (Fig. 88).

The Niche of the 55-meter Buddha (West Great Buddha)

The niche of the 55-meter Buddha is located at the western extremity of the natural cliff façade. The concept of a statue, which faces the valley and is protected by a niche containing a painted environment, is identical to all the smaller external niches facing the valley which have just been described.

This niche does not have a series of caves around it which would allow for ritual circling, as does the 38-meter Buddha. Rather, there is an excavated passageway, high up in the cliff and parallel to the ground, which allowed the pilgrim to circle the head. From the ambulatory, he could look out from windows, and even step onto the top of the Buddha's head in order to view the paintings. The access to the ambulatory in ancient times was similar to that which exists today.

The organization of the paintings in the trilobe niche, although it is on a much larger scale than any previously discussed, follows the same organizational system as in the other external niches. A central panel is placed on the axis of the central sculpted icon. The figures on this panel are facing head-south and feet-north. On either side of the central panel are panels with symmetrical compositions, the figures of which face east or west, their heads directed toward the central panel. The side walls of the niche below this are then decorated with rows of seated Buddha figures in a strictly geometric composition (Fig. 49).

From the composition painted in the other niches, we know that the most important figure was always painted in a panel in the center of the soffit of the niche, and was considerably larger than the other figures in the composition. Unfortunately, all the painted stucco from this part of the vault is missing. However, from the evidence of a few scattered fragments, it is possible to ascertain that there had been a large figure in Bodhisattva garments occupying the entire two-thirds of the upper part of the central panel (Fig. 48)⁶⁹.

Beside the Bodhisattva, to the north side of the soffit, were represented six Bodhisattvas seated on high-backed thrones with rugs thrown over the backs (see K, i, and Kakrak 'Hunter King'). Only three of these figures are now visible. The throne is placed within a trapezoidal arcade supported on short columns and surmounted by stylized Corinthian capitals, upon which are balconies containing busts of male and female devotees (see the architectural frame of Niche E, central panel (Fig. 77). Behind this truncated arcade is another architectural structure which is difficult to identify. Above this structure are small trees with twisted trunks. There

⁶⁹ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*. Kotera seems to have seen a tree pattern at the top (south) of the soffit composition, but I could not confirm this. He also believes this central figure to have been dressed in Bodhisattva garments. If he is correct about the presence of a Bodhi tree, then there would be an analogy with Niche D, Fondukistān, where a figure in Bodhisattva dress and crown is represented seated under a Bodhi tree. He is likewise the central and largest figure in the composition. The total concept of the composition at Fondukistān or Bāmiyān is also similar to a wall painting from Soubachi (Paul Pelliot, *Mission Paul Pelliot: Documents Archéologiques, Site de Koucha: Douldour-Aquor et Soubachi*, Dessins I and II).

is no attempt at perspective; all of these features are simply piled on top of each other, using the concept of 'above is behind' (Fig. 49).

The style and iconography of all the figures painted in the upper part of the soffit are alike. Originally, seven or eight seated figures of the same type were represented in each of the two side panels. Here, they are framed by alternating truncated and round arches; some sit on thrones, others do not. All have their ankles crossed, and their bodies in three-quarter profile; their hands are in a variety of graceful gestures. Not all of them have clearly identifiable mudrās. In the balconies are male and female personages, making offerings. The males are dressed in the same attire as Bāmiyān Bodhisattvas and similar to that of the seated figures. The female devotees, unique at Bāmiyān, are depicted in lush Indian style and wear diaphanous, short-sleeved tunics — a clearly delineated Indianized Central Asian fashion⁷⁰.

The palette of terracotta red, blue and white, with black outlining and gold contours, is consistent with paintings of the entire soffit. All these male figures wear striped dhotis and double scarves attached at the chest with arrowhead clasps, which is a simplified version of the dress found throughout Bāmiyān. The jewelry and crowns are also more restrained than those worn by the figures on the soffits of Niches E, H and 'i' in cave K; and at Kakrak. The drawing here, as everywhere at Bāmiyān, is freehand. The smoothness of the line and the elegance of some of the facial details are so extraordinary that one is amazed to be reminded of the large scale of the figures. (See Chapter VI for a discussion of the style of these figures). Next to the male figure is a unique figure at Bāmiyān: a fleshy, almost nude, female wearing a diaphanous gown with jewelry and a halo.

The side panels are framed on either side by a decorative band located in the shoulder of the niche. There is a garland of stylized lotuses under which is a trompe l'œil effect of curtains with a checkered design and hanging cords; kīrttimukhas, as well as the hidden face of a child, are barely discernible⁷¹. On the end of the frieze on the east side is a kneeling donor in Central Asian dress (Fig. 116).

Within these bands are placed the large holes which once held beams and later served as windows for the ambulatory. The original function of the beams is hard to reconstruct. Probably, they were used for scaffolding. It seems unlikely that the holes had a later function, except to allow light into the ambulatory. Kotera suggests that they supported balconies (as I have suggested for the 38-meter Buddha), but this is unlikely here, as the holes are placed at the curving of the niche, and the engineering problem would seem formidable.

Underneath the curtain on both sides of the vault were originally painted three rows, each containing five seated Buddhas. Much of this composition is now destroyed. The remaining Buddha images are all presented in a hieratic style that distinguishes these panels from the rhythmic composition on the soffit. It will be remembered that the side walls of all the niches are organized into similar geometric patterns consisting of seated Buddhas, each delineated by a circular mandorla, while in the soffit the side panels framing the central composition occasionally have a less geometric organization, such as here and in 'i'.

⁷⁰ A similar attire is worn by the female figure represented in the Treasure Cave, Dance of Queen Candraprabhā, at Kizil.

⁷¹ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān: Report of Survey, 1969*, Pl. 21, fig. 2; Yoshikawa Itsuji, 'Art of Bāmiyān,' p. 230. Itsuji thinks that the painted curtains are meant to represent the edge of the huge painted canopy hung over the Buddha statue, the top of the canopy being occupied by the composition on the soffit just described in the text. He compares this to the canopies frequently painted in the caves in Tun-huang and the one in the Golden Hall of the Hōryū-ji.

Painted on the east side of the vault are five seated Buddhas with golden halos and four-colored mandorlas. Each sits under his specific Bodhi tree and executes a distinct mudrā. Between the Buddhas are painted three stylized lotus blossoms springing from a single stem. The only difference between these Buddhas, aside from the mudrā, is the fact that one of them (Fig. 35) wears the cape and jewels previously described in 'i' and in the 38-meter Buddha niche, while to his proper right the remains of another crowned Buddha can be seen. These Buddhas appear to represent the five Mānuṣi Buddhas⁷².

Underneath these five remaining Buddhas was another row of Buddhas, of which fragments from two remain. They also appear to be seated in padmāsana, with the right shoulder uncovered. They have halos and mandorlas, but no Bodhi trees. Instead, they appear to sit in front of an architectural façade, and are divided from each other by columns with balconies (similar to the conception seen on the vault). The corresponding paintings on the western wall of the niche are almost completely destroyed. Only the Bodhi trees of the three central Buddhas remain, and parts of two heads with halos. From these scanty remains, it would appear that the composition was symmetrical.

Underneath the cusp of the vault on each side is a row of seated Buddhas. Again, the east side is better preserved. Each of the four Buddhas sits in padmāsana under his own Bodhi tree. In terms of mudrā and type of tree, each Buddha seems to correspond to the Buddha above it on the vault. The only exception is B.E.4, which is underneath the crowned and jewelled Buddha. Here, the figure is in monastic dress, but has shoulder flames (Fig. 48). His hands are in dhyānamudrā. Underneath this row of seated Buddhas is a highly eroded composition. Rowland believed the rest of each side wall contained rows of seated Buddhas in the Thousand Buddha scheme⁷³. It is clear, however, that there was a large halo, next to which stood an attendant wearing a crown with flying streamers. Next to the attendant is a large lotus. I would surmise that on the wall of each side of the niche stood a Buddha figure, similar to the arrangement in all of the niches of the seated Buddhas, and in several of the caves already described.

The west wall, which is still more ruined, appears to have been painted with a composition symmetrical to that described for the east wall. The first row of seated Buddhas, also four in number, all had their right shoulders uncovered; they sat in padmāsana, had halos and mandorlas and different Bodhi trees. The figure closest to the north appears to have also had shoulder flames, but the area is very damaged.

Originally, five medallions were painted on either side, underneath the cusp of the trefoil niche. Now, only four are visible (Fig. 13). Each medallion contains three figures flying toward the standing sculpted Buddha and offering donations to him.

Although smothered by dirt, the west side is easier to see than the east. This is one of the only examples where the figures in the compositions on each side are not symmetrical. The organization in groups of three appears to be roughly the same in each medallion. The central figure is placed slightly forward of the side figures, who seem to attend him. All the figures are represented as flying, their feet flopping up awkwardly. The third medallion, to the west, is the clearest. Here, we see persons, as in all the medallions on this side, which are similar in style, clothing

⁷² Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 10. In the *Mahāvastu*, vol. I, p. 267, there are listed Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, plus Śākyamuni, and Maitreya.

⁷³ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 109.

and coiffure. The figure in the center throws the offering, which he takes from the figure to his right. The figure to his left wears a ring on his index finger, presumably an offering to the Buddha. In the fourth medallion, the central figure languishes on the shoulder of the figure to his left. This gesture is repeated on the opposite side, although the themes of the medallions are considerably different.

Those on the east side are among the most interesting paintings of Bāmiyān. Unfortunately, they are covered with dirt, and so located that it is impossible to see them clearly or to photograph them. They have never been studied or completely described. The iconography of each medallion is so unique and complex that it is difficult to describe or identify them until the conservation work makes them accessible. The following description is an attempt to describe what is presently visible (Fig. 31).

The first medallion to the south side of the east wall has three figures. The central figure is placed in front of the two on the sides and is obviously the principal subject. This figure has the broad and stocky proportion of the Buddhas on the side walls of the vault. He wears a long brown tunic tied with a white sash and a white cape over his shoulders. The boots are extremely curious, made of animal skin (perhaps leopard) with the heel and toes cut out. The boots end abruptly below the knee, with red bindings. In the left hand, he holds a money bag of the same animal skin as the boots. The right palm is upturned. The head is largely destroyed, but streamers from a crown are discernible. The body faces front, with the knees, legs and feet turning awkwardly to the north. The faces of both discernible figures in this medallion are broad, with thick white shading emphasized with red lines. The figure to the right of the central figure in brown turns toward him, wears a yellow dhoti and carries a trident in his right hand. The figure to the left of center appears to be a female carrying a laden tray. It seems likely that the identification of these figures would be partially indicated by the figures in the other medallions. For the moment, one can only note the attributes associated with Kubera (the money purse) and Pāñcika (the trident).

The 55-meter Buddha Sculpture

Located in the western portion of the cliff, this Buddha image was the first of the three to be visited by pilgrims. It was originally gilded and bedecked with jewels. (See chapter VI for more details concerning construction). The right arm appears to have been raised in abhayamudrā and the left hung down next to the body. Where the revetment still exists the drapery is in thin rolls parallel to the left shoulder, and diverging toward the middle of the breast in order to curve down. The drapery then moves upward again toward the right shoulder. As in the smaller Buddha, there is a convergence of folds above the left arm. The drapery folds move across the lower left shoulder and left arm making a 'u'-shaped sweep between the legs and then stop above the right hip. The line of the skirt folds meets the folds on the chest at about a 70° angle. There the folds converge at four places: (1) the upper center chest, (2) the left side, (3) the right side of the chest above the armpit, and (4) between the legs. The folds are parallel as they move toward each of these points. However, the garment as a whole is not arranged along a single axis, as for instance on the Buddha from Mathurā⁷⁴. Therefore, the folds do not create a completely symmetrical pattern.

⁷⁴ Indian Museum, Calcutta: Pl. 80 in Rowland, *Art and Architecture*.

The Caves at the Base of the 55-meter Buddha

At the base of the Buddha, carved around an open courtyard surrounding the feet, are eleven caves, all but two of which open directly onto the floor of the Buddha niche. Hackin numbered them from the center eastwards I to V, and from the center westward VI to XI. This was not a very satisfactory system (Fig. 89). These caves, which are quite important for their architecture and architectural decoration, have been thoroughly described and discussed in the two volumes of the French Delegation series on Bāmiyān, and in Z. Tarzi's book, which is specifically concerned with the problems they present. These, and all the caves above the 55-meter Buddha, contain no extant paintings. However, their general organization accords with the principles noticed in the caves with paintings. In fact, there are no discernible differences in size and function (this is not true of the caves at the top of the cliff). Hackin concluded that the caves adjacent to the 55-meter Buddha were of a later date than the caves further to the east, where the motifs are painted instead of being moulded in stucco as they are here. He dated Caves I through XI from the sixth to the early seventh century, excepting Cave V, which he dated to the sixth century⁷⁵. Hackin's late date for the caves would accord with his theory that the completion of the program around the 55-meter Buddha was interrupted by the Islamic invasions. He does not tell us to which conquest of Bāmiyān he is referring.

The plans of Caves I, II and XI were apparently identical (Figs. 91, 93). They were all octagonal with domes, and each had a double band of decoration in the zone of the domes. There were no paintings, but the cave was decorated by an ambitious program of sculpture, moulded figures, and moulded stucco architectural decoration. There were seven large niches for seated Buddha statues in the first zone of decoration around the walls. Above this (Fig. 94) were two rows of niches enclosing Buddhas surrounded by a combination of halos and mandorlas in a distinctive moulded design characteristic of Bāmiyān and Fondukistān. This form can be described as an olive topped with a triple pearl motif. This motif has been discussed above under the description of Cave G. As I have noted, in Cave G only the mandorla is decorated with this motif, while here it decorates the combined halo and mandorla⁷⁶.

The first band of decoration in the drum consists of trilobe niches enclosing seated Buddhas. At the summit of the niches, crowning the Buddhas, were moulded emblemata of a pomegranate with floating streamers attached to the base and the neck. The motif was discussed above in regards to Cave A⁷⁷. The arcade above is identical to the niches except that it consisted of a simple arch, which was more suited to the standing Buddhas contained within the arches. Here, the decoration is the same. This type of architectural decoration is also found in the entrances

⁷⁵ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 78; Tarzi, *L'Architecture*, p. 101, dates I through X to the sixth and seventh centuries, and XI, like D to the seventh and eighth centuries.

⁷⁶ Barrett, 'Gandhāran Bronzes,' pp. 361-365. He considers the motif, in the form found in Cave I to date from the seventh and eighth centuries.

⁷⁷ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, fig. 34; Tarzi, 'Les Vases d'Abondance,' Pl. 2. Tarzi considers this a royal symbol and demonstrates that the shape found in Cave I has nothing in common with the Indian vase, although the latter does appear in another decorative context in the cave, and in fact relates to the Iranian pomegranate. Royal emblems at the summit of the arches originate in Iran and are used throughout Central Asian art.

to Niches C and E at Fondukistān. Where at the back of Niche C, framed by the arch and architectural decoration, was a sculpture of a seated Buddha with shoulder flames and water on the pedestal. Niche E, Fondukistān, contained a royal couple. The similarity of the visual effect is evident. The decorative forms of the latter, as Hackin noted, are identical to those in Caves I, II, and XI in Bāmiyān⁷⁸.

The best example of how this combination of motifs originally looked has been preserved on a bronze stūpa in the Peshawar Museum (Fig. 95)⁷⁹. On the stūpa, four Buddhas are each seated in a niche formed by an arch resting on short pilasters with stylized Corinthian capitals. This motif exists in the Bāmiyān caves. He is crowned, at the summit of the arch, with a royal emblem (on the stūpa it is a crescent enclosing a globe with long floating streamers).

In the Bāmiyān caves, between the arches of the first arcade were kīrttimukhas upon which were placed seated Buddhas. Hackin also believed that there might have been winged personages holding out crowns with floating streamers toward the Buddhas enthroned in the arches⁸⁰.

It should be noted that all of the forms mentioned so far also appear either in stucco or paint in caves to the east of the 53-meter Buddha. The most distinctive feature of these caves was probably the ceiling, as seen in Cave XI. Cave I now has a completely smooth dome, but Hackin believed that it originally looked like the ceiling of Cave XI⁸¹. The ceiling in Cave XI is typologically similar to several painted ceilings at Bāmiyān. A maṇḍala-like design contains a central figure in monastic or Bodhisattva garments surrounded by concentric rows of Buddhas. The painted ceilings are darkened or abraded, so the decorative details, such as the pearl rondels, are hardly visible. All of the details stand out with dramatic clarity in the three-dimensional stucco moulding of these forms found in Cave XI. Here, the geometric character of these designs appears at its most vivid. The inside of the dome is covered with an elaborate coffering consisting of a central seated Buddha inside an octagon which expands to a star-shaped pattern. Two rows of Buddhas, containing eight and sixteen Buddhas, are integrated through a complex pattern of triangles, diamonds, and hexagons (Fig. 96).

Cave V is interesting for its lantern roof, as well as its complex moulded decoration (Fig. 97). From the next room, Cave V is entered from the north and connects with the vestibule through the west wall, thus leaving the east and south walls free for the large niches, each containing a Buddha statue. On the walls above the niches, an arcade of trilobe arches contains seated Buddhas, one of which is now in the Musée Guimet⁸². Moulded architectural decoration is the same as in the other caves in this area. The ceiling contains the elaborate decorative schemes found elsewhere in painted form, but again the use of high relief moulding achieves a particularly dramatic effect. The decoration consists mainly of vegetal forms contained within the geometric pattern on the ceiling and griffins on the ends of the false beams. This combination is found painted on the lantern roof at N.

The rest of the caves in this area are located above the 55-meter Buddha.

⁷⁸ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 53 and figs. 157, 158, and 160.

⁷⁹ The stūpa is bronze, without inlay, and measures 34 cm. high. Its number in the Peshawar Museum is 671.

⁸⁰ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, p. 21.

⁸¹ Hackin and Hackin, *Le Site archéologique*, p. 43.

⁸² Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, fig. 98.

The Caves above the 55-meter Buddha

The order in which one visits the caves today does not accord with the D.A.F.A. numeration. Cave Complex XII consists of four rooms (Fig. 98). Only the sanctuary has decoration. There was a niche for a large seated Buddha statue at the north end. The vault as well as the walls of the cell (XII-4) originally contained multiple painted Buddhas, now destroyed.

Cave XIII is a long rectangular hall.

Cave XIV is also a rectangular caitya hall. In the north wall was a large shrine for a seated Buddha statue. The front face of this shrine is ornamented with a rinceau topped with a royal emblem of a globe and floating streamers (Fig. 99). On both side walls, above the banquettes, is an arcade of trilobe arches containing seated Buddha statues.

Cave XV is one of the most interesting architectural examples at Bāmiyān. Unfortunately, it is now almost inaccessible. It is the most complex of the lantern roof type of cave. The roof is carved as if supported on slender columns, and at the apex of the successive tiers is a high dome (Fig. 101). Rowland believed that the beams were at one time covered with painted Buddhist deities (as existed on the other lantern roofs at Bāmiyān), 'so that the whole arrangement was not only a roof, but a kind of maṇḍala or schematized representation of the celestial regions and the mystical Buddhas presiding over them'⁸³. It is interesting to note that this same architectural type with slender columns was reproduced in painting in Cave E at Folādi, thus continuing the tradition of moulded or sculpted forms reproduced later by painted counterparts.

Kakrak

To the southeast and about three miles from the central façade of the Bāmiyān Valley is the Kakrak Valley, which also contains a Buddha statue sculpted into the rock and facing the valley (Fig. 102). The standing figure of the Buddha is about six meters tall. Around the niche, now only accessible by ropes and ladders, were two octagonal caves. Only one contains decoration. The plans and description left by Hackin are highly unsatisfactory. No dimensions for the caves are given; the orientation of one of the caves and the reconstruction of the painting in its dome is not given. We must assume that the plan is drawn north to south, as is traditional (Fig. 47). According to the plan, it appears that there are no niches for Buddha statues at Kakrak, as is also the case at Folādi, both unlike the system at Bāmiyān. The paintings, which covered the entire wall surface of the cave, had been protected by a layer of mud, perhaps applied by the last Buddhist residents of the valley at the time of Islamic occupation.

The themes and style of the paintings are related to paintings in Bāmiyān. The dome was decorated with a large seated figure in Bodhisattva garments and tripartite crown. He holds a vase in his left hand, and is surrounded by a maṇḍala composed of seven circles, each containing sixteen Buddhas. This composition is surrounded by eleven circles, each with a central Buddha surrounded by a circle of Buddhas (Fig. 26). Between the circles are stylized vajra and flower designs. The drum zone consists of a painted façade framing seventeen seated Buddha figures and one figure in princely dress. (See Chapter VIII for further discussion).

⁸³ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 106.

Folādi

The valley of Folādi, which is the largest secondary valley near Bāmiyān, contains a number of caves located on either side of a small ravine near Deh-i Āhangarān. This ravine is about four kilometers south-west of the central Bāmiyān façade containing the colossal Buddhas.

Originally the numerous caves on the western side of the ravine reached four or five stories. A rockslide and general erosion of the façade have made the upper stories and lower part inaccessible, and has virtually destroyed the middle ones. There are fortifications at the point where the ravine opens onto the main Folādi Valley. These are included in a forthcoming study on the fortresses of the Hindu Kush⁸⁴.

I have included the floorplans of the caves (Figs. 82, 104, 105) to give an overview of the architectural layout, but I shall only describe in detail the paintings in the caves⁸⁵. It will be noted that the architectural forms are basically the same as those found at Bāmiyān, but that the architecture never attains the complexity that characterizes the rock architecture at Bāmiyān. In addition, there is no moulded relief decoration at Folādi. There was no sculpture found there, and if they existed, they may have occupied the niches in the few rectangular vaulted rooms (C1, F1, and G1); the investigators did not comment on this possibility.

The enumeration begins from the back of the ravine (Fig. 82). The first cave with significant painted decoration is Cave B. This is a small cave with a roof carved in imitation corbelling and a dome in the center. The painting is executed in red on white and consists of numerous painted Buddhas. The preliminary drawing is very hasty and has an unfinished appearance. On the soffit of the doorway are larger standing Buddhas surrounded by mandorlas.

In Cave C there remains along the staircase a few fragments of faded paintings in pale blue tones. Cave C has a lantern roof (Fig. 104) originally covered with paintings that are now under soot. On the north wall are four standing Buddha figures; on the south wall are remains of three standing figures; and on the west wall are two Buddhas, one on either side of the door. The Buddha to the right is the better preserved. His face is shown in three-quarter profile; he wears a white robe with the neck dropping low on the chest (see Cave N, Bāmiyān, seated Buddha — Fig. 85). At the neckline of the robe is a yellow design like embroidery.

Cave E contains the best preserved paintings at Folādi and is discussed in Chapter VI. The plans and photographs for this cave are presented in Figs. 16, 25, 105, 106, and 107.

Cave F originally had a painted lantern ceiling similar to E, but only a few seated Buddhas separated by stūpas remain⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ The late Marc Le Berre prepared a study on the fortresses of the Hindu Kush. He concluded that they belonged to the same cultural group, were built during a relatively short period of time, but show several stages of repair. They are well designed and constructed. The only precise comparisons he had located are a few sites north of the Oxus. On the basis of these and the pottery, he dates the fortresses to the period of the Western Turks (pers. comm.). This study should be a valuable contribution to the study of the history of the Hindu Kush.

⁸⁵ The architecture is discussed in B. Dagens, M. Le Berre, and D. Schlumberger, *Monuments préislamiques d'Afghanistan*. See also Umberto Scerrato, 'A Short Note on Some Recently Discovered Buddhist Grottoes near Bāmiyān, Afghanistan,' pp. 94-120.

⁸⁶ Scerrato, 'A Short Note,' p. 98 and figs. 9-11.

Fondukistān

In the Ghorband Valley, 128 km. from Bāmiyān on the route from Bāmiyān to Kapiśa and Kabul, are located the ruins of a Buddhist monastery, which has taken the name of the nearby village of Fondukistān. The Fondukistān River flows in front of the steep hill where the monastery is situated and enters the southern side of the Ghorband Valley near Siyagird. The monastery was excavated by Carl in May 1937. Hackin visited the site, and his notes are the only discussion we have of this unique Buddhist center. The paintings and statues have never been studied as an ensemble, and no attempt has ever been made to explain the complete iconographic program of the site. But, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, the stylistic characteristics of Fondukistān are intimately related to those of the Bāmiyān Valley (see Chapter VI). Those features of the iconography of Fondukistān that relate to the central purpose of this book have been discussed in Chapter VII. The style of the sculptures, one of the most important features of Fondukistān, are beyond the scope of this study, but have been summarily described. The numerous iconographic problems, and the relationship to the arts of Kashmir are only two aspects of this interesting site which deserve more detailed inquiry. I believe that the following condensed description of the site will demonstrate both the similarities and differences between the iconography and technique of Fondukistān and the art of the other Buddhist centers of the Hindu Kush.

The only part of the monastic complex of Fondukistān that was excavated was a sanctuary and its subsidiary rooms: 'cellules, salle de réunion, communs.'⁸⁷ No dimensions at all are given in the publication. The sanctuary was approximately square, built of unbaked large bricks and apparently vaulted (Fig. 108). Twelve niches opened onto a large room with a stūpa at the center. Apparently, only the square base remained⁸⁸. There was a single entrance at the southern extremity of the east wall. The external face of each niche, facing onto the central room, was decorated with an arch, resting on pillars with pseudo-Corinthian capitals. As the excavators noted, both the typology and the decorative forms and technique of modelling are very close to those found in Caves I, II, and XI at Bāmiyān (Figs. 91, 93).

Although paintings of personages as well as decorative motifs once covered the vaults and walls of the niches, they were only the secondary features of the decoration. The focus of each niche was a sculpted 'tableau vivant,' with the paintings used largely as background. At Fondukistān the sculpture was more important than at Folādi and Kakrak, where the painting played an important and often principal role. It also differed from those caves at Bāmiyān in the area of the 55-meter Buddha, where (it would seem) paint was used only to enhance the sculpture, and lacked the independent (if secondary) role it had at Fondukistān. The statues at Fondukistān were made of clay mixed with animal hair and straw and were fixed on wooden armatures; they were covered with paint and formed a unified composition with the paintings. This technique and the combination of sculpture and painted environment are also found at Tepe Maranjān. (We have already noticed this technique at Bāmiyān — see, for example, the description of Cave C above.)

⁸⁷ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 51.

⁸⁸ The stūpa occupied the center of a covered room and was surrounded by paintings and sculptures of the Buddha and other deities. There is no indication in the published notes left by Hackin (*ibid.*) that the stūpa or the area around it was excavated. In the brief time in May 1937 which was dedicated to the work of excavating Fondukistān, it is likely that this area was not explored.

All of the niches were blocked at Fondukistān; some were totally destroyed and did not permit any reconstruction of their contents. Niche A, on the west wall diagonally opposite the entrance, was badly damaged. Only vague details are given, and it was apparently not possible to reconstruct the composition. Some busts of elegantly gesturing female figures were recovered and are in the Kabul Museum⁸⁹. It appears that these figures were fixed behind a balustrade, similar to the musicians painted on the vault of Niche 'i' in Bāmiyān. There were, in addition, minor sculptures of devatās. The composition appears to be similar to that observed in Bāmiyān, Cave C, where remains of drapery were seen to have supported busts of statues.

Niches B, F, and G were inaccessible. Details concerning Niches H and I (south wall) were found in Carl's notes and reflect the fact that little was reconstructible from the fragments of paintings and statues in these niches.

On the west wall is first the entrance corridor, then Niches J and L, both of which are empty. Between these niches there originally stood a statue of the Buddha, now completely destroyed. Two donors, a male and a female kneeling at the foot of the socle, are preserved⁹⁰.

Niche K

Niche K was originally another entrance to the center room. It was later walled in to form a shallow niche. On the right side wall were found representations of two male figures in Central Asian tunics and armor⁹¹. These were not preserved; all that remains is the copy made by Carl (Fig. 109). The identification of these figures as the lunar and solar deities apparently rests on the existence of two long thin crescents springing from the shoulders and following the nimbus of one of the figures, the 'moon god'; the second figure was said to have had a red halo, thus representing the 'sun god.' These attributions seem highly questionable, both in terms of the missing details in the damaged paintings and in terms of the interpretation itself. Also, there may have been another pair of figures on the opposite wall, giving a group of four male figures. Representations of lunar and solar deities at Bāmiyān are quite consistent, and they are different from those just described. I also know of no depiction in Bāmiyān of these deities appearing together in a composition comparable to the Fondukistān figures. On the other hand, the red halo is used for Buddhas in Cave N (as well as other caves at Bāmiyān) as a purely decorative device. The garments of one figure with crown and earrings are typologically quite similar to those found on donor figures at Bāmiyān. The tiger skin boots are worn by a donor in the niche of the 38-meter Buddha. Similar boots are worn by the deity in the south medallion, east wall, of the 55-meter Buddha. I would like to suggest that the figure with the shoulder crescents is the guardian king Vaiśravaṇa, and the other figure his attendant general. If a companion pair existed, we might have instead Vaiśravaṇa and the three other guardian kings⁹².

⁸⁹ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, figs. 156, 149.

⁹⁰ Ibid., fig. 203. Kneeling donors in unbaked earth are also preserved from Tepe Maranjān.

⁹¹ Ibid., figs. 195, 199.

⁹² I have discussed the attribution of the Fundukistān Vaiśravaṇa in 'Vaiśravaṇa from Northwest India.' The closest parallel for this figure can be found in the representations of Vaiśravaṇa from Central Asia, not only with regard to the costume, but specifically with regard to the shoulder crescents which have been identified as flames. For an excellent discussion of this iconographic type, see Phyllis Granoff, 'Tobatsu Bishamon: Three Japanese Statues in the United States and an Outline of the Rise of this Cult in East Asia,' pp. 144-167.

Niche C

Moving to the western corner of the north wall, we find Niche C. On the external face of the niche is moulded an arch on columns, as noted earlier. At the apex of the niche was a royal emblem of a pomegranate tied with flying streamers. This motif, in the same position, was also characteristic of Bāmiyān, and has been discussed under Cave G.

At the back of the niche was seated a large Buddha in monastic dress, with both shoulders covered. He sits in dhyānāsana, with his hands in dhyānamudrā. The folds of the gown are fluid and elegant; the neck draping is rather low on the chest in graceful folds similar to those seen in Cave N, Bāmiyān, and quite unlike the draperies in Gandhāra or Kapiśa. Flames spring from the shoulders of this Buddha. Along the base were apparently stylized waves. The head of the Buddha has not been recovered.

On either side of the large central Buddha was a smaller seated Buddha, each in lalitāsana. They wear monastic gowns, with their right shoulders bare. The central Buddha is depicted in the hieratic mode; the secondary Buddhas have a more mannered style, a longer canon of proportions with elegant movements. This is consistent with conventions already noted at Bāmiyān for the depiction of primary and secondary figures. Stylistically, these small Buddhas are the plastic counterpart of the Buddhas painted in Cave N; a distinguishing feature, however, is the stylized treatment of the drapery (compare Fig. 52).

In each of the corners next to the large Buddha were seated small female deities. On each side of the soffit of the vault, traces of nimbuses and attendant deities can be discerned. Behind the Buddha, surrounding his halo, can be seen seven holes, presumably to support smaller statues. The excavators identified this scene as the miracle of Śrāvastī. While this seems accurate, it is clear that the conception is far more stylized than any found previously in Kapiśa and Gandhāra.

On the left side wall in situ was a reclining female figure in front of a triangular curtain of flames. This has been identified as the story of the mother of Jyotiṣka⁹³. (Not related to the Buddha with shoulder flames in the art of Bāmiyān that was discussed in Chapter VII).

Niche D

The decoration of the next niche, D, is extremely interesting. The decoration of the façade of the niche is missing. At the back of the niche sat a 'large' Bodhisattva (no measurements are given) on a brick socle (Fig. 111). The figure is in

⁹³ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, fig. 167. I only know of four other representations of this story. Three of these are in Gandhāran art; among these, the closest to the Fondukistān representation is illustrated in figure 260 in A. Foucher, *L'Art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*. The painting most closely related to the Fondukistān sculpture is from Kirish in Kucha dated to the eighth century. According to Albert Grünwedel's description (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 186), the same depiction of Jyotiṣka's birth is painted on the back wall of the Hall with the Animal Frieze. Since no plate of this image is given, it is impossible to compare the iconography of these unusual subjects more precisely. The tale represented by the Kirish and Fondukistān scenes does not appear in the Pāli *Jātaka*. There is a story of Jyotiṣka in the *Mahāvastu* (Vol. II, pp. 254 ff.) but this only relates how Jyotiṣka obtained his merit. It is in this form that he appears also in the *Divyāvadāna*. As Jones remarks (*Mahāvastu*, vol. II, p. 254), 'There is no apparent reason for the introduction of this story here.' It is placed very strangely in this text in the middle of the first *Avalokita-Sūtra*. The exact tale represented in Fondukistān is not found in the *Mahāvastu*.

lalitāsana, the right leg resting on four pillows, and the left leg pendant and resting on a lotus. Unfortunately, the torso has disappeared; the limbs and the dhoti, however, exhibit the same elegant and complex lines and long slender proportions that we have noticed in Niche C and certain paintings from Bāmiyān. The face of the Bodhisattva (Fig. 110) has full cheeks, a small chin and exaggerated almond-shaped eyes. Most of the crown is missing. The face was covered with gold leaf. The statue is surrounded with an aureole formed by the olive-shaped form with triple pearl design characteristic of several Bāmiyān caves (e.g., G and I) (Fig. 112). Over the aureole are the remains of a Bodhi tree (apparently modelled rather than painted).

To the proper right of the Bodhisattva in the corner of the niche is a considerably smaller figure. This figure has its left leg tucked under the right pendant limb. The construction of the jewelry (necklaces, armband, and bracelets) is very complicated. It was moulded and applied separately, and was extremely fragile. The crown is particularly interesting, because it is three-dimensional the construction is easier to understand than the similar painted crowns at Bāmiyān. In fact, we find here two crowns: the outer one has a large central flower applied against a crown of smaller flowers; while the second crown sits on a rolled band which ties behind the head, with streamers floating down behind the head. The second crown surrounds the chignon and rises in a kind of cockade. Long curls flow over the shoulders. The skin was painted white; this has faded, leaving the red undercoating. Another figure of the same type was placed to the left of the central figure⁹⁴. This figure, although wearing elaborate jewelry and coiffure, does not have a crown. It might have held something in its left hand⁹⁵.

On the side walls of the niche, at the same level as these figures, were placed two Buddhas, each on a lotus with a long stem supported by anthropomorphic representations of nāga kings. 'To the right, a Buddha of the classical type is placed against an aureole with stylized flames.'⁹⁶ There is no photograph given, and it is impossible to determine if these flames were also affixed so as to come from the shoulders. This Buddha figure, now in the Musée Guimet, has a curious motif on the chest emerging from the drooping cowl collar of the monastic gown⁹⁷. It differs from the śrīvatsa pattern found at Fōlādī, Kakrak, and Khotan. The Guimet figure has three semicircles with cone-like projections. Could this be a flame motif? The Buddha sits in padmāsana, his right hand in abhayamudrā, and the left hand in his lap.

Opposite this Buddha sat another, which is also at the Musée Guimet. The Buddha also sat on a lotus but is preserved only down to the waist. The head has been restored in Paris (Fig. 37), and it is no longer possible to ascertain if it originally wore a crown. The statue wears earrings and a three-pointed cape with a fringe, jewels, and a wide collar — the same type as that found at Bāmiyān. The present example does not have shoulder effulgences, but there is no way of knowing if they were lost or once affixed to the wall. (I have previously noted that all additive details were moulded separately and not fixed firmly to the statues.) It is interesting to note, however, that Hackin compared this statue to one found by Barthoux at Hadda, but gave no reference. This latter statue is now in the Musée Guimet.

⁹⁴ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 54. The jewelry, flowers, and flames were all made of moulded clay. The Kabul Museum has a large uncatalogued collection of these fragments.

⁹⁵ Rowland, *The Art of Central Asia*, p. 114. In this color plate there seems to be a water jug lying against the figure's leg.

⁹⁶ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 54.

⁹⁷ M. Hallade, *Gandhāran Art of North India*, fig. 175.

[...] un fragment de statuette en stuc, provenant de Hadda (mission J. Barthoux) montre un vêtement de même coupe; dans ce dernier cas, le Buddha porte un collier en forme de torque et un second collier à triple tresse souple, prolongé par des têtes de *makaras* (?) affrontés tenant dans leur gueule l'extrémité d'une chaînette retenant un cabochon. Trois croissants ornent le camail, l'un en position médiane sur la poitrine, deux sur les épaules⁹⁸.

Toward the summit of this niche, found in situ, was a small figure of a male (Fig. 113). The lower body is bare, the genitals clearly showing. A pearl belt underlines the protruding belly. The upper part is covered by a shirt with flaring sides. The iconographic significance is unclear⁹⁹.

Niche E

The decoration on the façade of Niche E is still extant. The arch on short fat columns with pseudo-Corinthian capitals is quite similar to those of Caves I, II, V, and XI at Bāmiyān¹⁰⁰.

On either side of the entrance to the niche (between the entrance and the pilasters) were found paintings. To the right was a seated Buddha under a Bodhi tree (perhaps identifiable as Śākyamuni); on the left side is a Bodhisattva in *lalitāsana* with a blue lotus in his right hand and a waterpot with a pointed spout in the left. This figure is identified as Maitreya (Fig. 14). The elongated proportions and graceful gestures are characteristic of all the art of Fondukistān, despite the fluid line, there is a planar quality resulting from the total lack of chiaroscuro. The contour lines are all drawn with an exceedingly thin, swift brush; most of the outlines are in red. An exception is the familiar Gandhāran convention of drawing the eyebrow and eye area with alternating red and black lines. The decorative forms of the jewelry and the crown seem to have been conceived separately (like the clay appliques on the statues). The type of crown and streamers and the simplified contours of the refined features are also seen on some of the female figures painted in Niche 'i' and the flying divinities in Niche H. The strong primary colors and the use of colors in specifically defined units gives the painting a quality of formal

⁹⁸ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 55. Musée Guimet 20996. See the list in Chapter VII for comparative examples.

⁹⁹ The only comparable image known to me is a clay statue, extant from waist to knees, from Ushkur in the Śrī Pratap Singh Museum in Śrinigar, Kashmir (Museum No. BC 34); R.C. Kak, *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of the Śrī Pratap Singh Museum, Srinigar*, p. 24. Both statues have the same curious pearl trimmed jacket curving over the belly. Pearl trimmed bodices also curve over the bulging bellies of some sculptures of women at Martand (ca. early eighth century), but there is a lower garment also. It is interesting that certain heads from Ushkur also bear a stylistic similarity to the Bodhisattva head recovered from Niche D, Fondukistān (Fig. 110). The total configuration depicted in Niche D may prove helpful in deciphering similar iconographic arrangements at Bāmiyān, where, in keeping with the general compositional principles, all decorative or narrative details have been omitted. Thus, in the central panel of Niche i, and the side wall of the 55-meter Buddha (Fig. 49), the image with triple pointed cape and crown is shown together with an image with crown but no cape, worn with monastic garb. The same conjunction — two crowned Buddhas, one with and the other without cape — is also present at Parihāspura. In Niche D, Fondukistān, the difference is that the crowned figure is the Bodhisattva Śākyamuni in Bodhisattva dress and pose (i.e., the Buddha-to-be). I would suggest that Śākyamuni with the three-pointed cape is the Buddha-to-be represented in the Tuṣita Heaven.

¹⁰⁰ The trilobe arch on short fat columns with pseudo-Corinthian capitals appears to be characteristic of the art of the Hindu Kush. One finds it in Caves I, II, V, and XI, at Bāmiyān; also on the three bronze stūpas from Peshāwar Museum, all from the Ghorband Valley, Pakistan (e.g., Fig. 95).

abstraction, geometric yet highly decorative. It should be noted that this figure has been considerably restored.

It is interesting to note Hackin's analysis of this Bodhisattva:

Cette image prolonge, en dépit de ses gaucheries et d'un maniérisme outré, le charme et la grâce des modèles indiens du VI^e siècle (Magadha) et peut être rapprochée de certaines peintures tibétaines, en particulier d'une Tārā blanche. Les sources d'inspiration indiennes de ces images tibétaines se placent sensiblement à la même époque que les peintures de Fondukistān (VII^e siècle ap. J.-C.)¹⁰¹.

At the back of this niche was found a pair of headless statues, a male and a female. They are separated by and leaning on four cushions¹⁰². Both figures are quite elongated and graceful. The male wears a Central Asian tunic with high-pointed felt boots. His costume style is similar to that of the deity from Niche K in Fondukistān and the donors in C and the 38-meter and 55-meter Buddha niches at Bāmiyān. The textile pattern of embroidered rondels is found in the 38-meter Buddha niche and throughout the art of Central Asia. The female figure is very voluptuous and seemingly dressed in the diaphanous garments and jewelry of India. The use of the Central Asian princely fashion for the male (presumably royal) figure and the Indian fashion for the female is consistent with the conventions found throughout the paintings of Bāmiyān. Underneath the pedestal of this royal couple was found a funerary urn containing, in addition to the ashes, two coins. These coins were studied by Ghirshman and given an early seventh century date until they were studied again by Göbl, who established that one of the coins had a countermark datable to 689¹⁰³. As the technique and style of the site are homogenous and there is no evidence of additions or alterations, it can be assumed that the site was constructed at one time. Another urn, wrapped in a plain white silk cloth, was found in the right hand corner of the niche. Since no further information is given, it is assumed that the urn contained no datable material.

The meaning of the urns, with regard to the burial customs of relevant ethnic groups, has never been studied. It is likely that, could this burial custom be localized, we would gain important information concerning the ethnic identity of the rulers of the Hindu Kush, as well as the function of the site¹⁰⁴.

The back of the niche had been decorated with paintings. All that remains are copies made by Carl of two female figures, one with light, the other with dark skin, and both depicted in the now familiar Indian mode of the Bāmiyān style. The voluptuousness of the corporeal type is belied, however, by the lack of volume and the abstract treatment of the body parts and the jewelry¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰¹ Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, p. 56.

¹⁰² Ibid., figs. 189-194.

¹⁰³ Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephtalites*, pp. 28-29. Here Ghirshman on the basis of his analysis of the coins, dates the site to the early seventh century; Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*, p. 314, studies the coins again and identifies the drachma of Chosroes II as having a countermark of 70 H., which equals A.D. 689, thus giving a terminus post quem for the burial.

¹⁰⁴ The same custom was practised at Tepe Maranjān where two terracotta jars containing human bones were found under the socle which supported the remains of two over life-size statues with smaller secondary figures (Hackin, Carl, and Meunié, *Diverses recherches*, pp. 7-8, figs. 9-13). This burial custom, the similarity of sculptural technique, and certain stylistic and iconographic features, indicate a closer chronological relationship between Fondukistān and Tepe Maranjān than previously suggested.

¹⁰⁵ A stylistic peculiarity at Kizil is the presence of figures typologically similar to each other except that their complexions are alternately light and dark. The only other example of this theme at Bāmiyān is in Niche 'i', which can be compared to a painting at Kizil; see above, note 97.

Remains of busts of female personages were found intact on the side walls. Their style and Indian mode of representation are similar to those of the figures already discussed. The transition between the wall and the bust in each case was marked by a piece of curved drapery, similar to that already remarked upon in Cave C, Bāmiyān.

Nigār (Previously Called Dokhtar-i-Noshirwan)

Nigār consists of two rock-cut units, one above the other, now in a state of total ruin. The well-known painting originally covered the back wall of the upper unit. Access to the painting is very difficult. Originally, a wooden staircase was probably built across the face of the cliff. The staircase could have been partially supported by the diagonal stone element carved out of the rock (Fig. 115) and still visible today.

The lower of the two units was excavated to resemble a shallow semidomed unit whose back wall was originally painted. Today this unit is totally ruined and only traces of red, yellow, and blue paint remain.

The upper unit is larger, about 17 m. high, 12 m. long and 3.5 to 4 m. wide, with a low semidome. Still discernible are clearly spaced holes for wooden beams at the top and bottom of the room.

The architectural remains provide only limited information on the date and function of Nigār. The D.A.F.A. report¹⁰⁶ does not actually discuss the architectural unit as a whole nor does it propose a possible function for it. From the present remains one can surmise that: originally, a wooden floor was supported by the floor beams and further carried on the rough stone outcropping, which serves now as the floor of the upper unit. At the top of the unit the deeply-cut, evenly spaced holes suggest wooden beams that supported a canopy-like structure that extended under the shallow, rock-cut dome. There are also vertical cuts at each end of the back wall, which run the height of the room; these cuts probably served for vertical wooden supports that might also have supported an awning-like structure. There are no holes along the sides of the floor to hold the additional posts that would have been necessary to support a false roof. The present rock floor of the upper rock-cut unit is less than 4 m. wide. As noted, a wooden floor space would still have been very narrow.

There is no indication that the unit originally contained other elements such as statues or places, such as a ledge, where small statues or offerings could be placed or additional ritual elements, such as an altar. Furthermore, the architectural space is so narrow that adequate circulation for any sort of ritual or ceremony is difficult to imagine. There are no additional rooms or other architectural spaces carved into the cliff. All of the persons using the structures must have circulated by external staircases to other structures, permanent or mobile in the valley.

I would like to suggest that the unit at Nigār could have served as a balcony with a wooden railing and canopy. This suggestion is based on internal evidence — the dimensions of the unit, the holes indicating a wooden superstructure the lack of other facilities, such as sanitary facilities, which would indicate habitation.

It is likely that additional pavilions were constructed in front of the façade during special occasions. Such temporary architecture has been repeatedly described in the accounts of Hsüan-tsang¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ Godard, Godard, and Hackin, *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, pp. 65-74.

¹⁰⁷ Hiuen Tsiang, *Sī-yu-ki*, vol. I, pp. 218-219.

Evidence for monumental balconies that were used by the nobility as viewing stands exist at Bāmiyān. One example is the painting adorning the shoulders of the soffit of the niche of the 38-meter Buddha, which depicts royal figures seated in a balcony during a ceremonial occasion. In front of these paintings are carved stone ledges that run around the head of the Buddha. A Japanese scholar has suggested that originally a wooden balustrade was attached to this stone ledge¹⁰⁸. In effect he is suggesting that the nobility would have been seated on this ledge as in a balcony and thus would have resembled the painting located directly behind them. Although I am somewhat doubtful about this interpretation at Bāmiyān, I do find this suggestion applicable to Nigār.

Not only can the original appearance and function of the unit at Nigār be hypothetically reconstructed on the basis of the evidence from Bāmiyān but I believe that the entire architectural concept of Nigār, although on a much more modest scale, was similar to the one at Bāmiyān. In both cases there may have been a functional relationship between the rock-cut architectural units in the façade and an activity that took place in the valley in front of the façade. If the suggested reconstruction of Nigār as a balcony is correct then the occupants must have been observing some activity taking place in the valley.

The similarities between the rock-cut architecture and the function of Nigār and Bāmiyān is consistent with the stylistic relationships of the paintings at the two sites as will be discussed. A brief analysis of the few rock-cut sanctuaries near Nigār further confirms an attribution of Nigār to the period when other Buddhist rock-cut sanctuaries in the region were constructed.

The architectural units near to the Nigār complex are the rock-cut caves located south of Qala-i Dokhtar-i Noshirwan. Those caves which have been examined, consisted of ensembles of two and three rock-cut rooms, and belong to a type common in Afghanistan. The caves 'go back inside the mountain, are joined by corridors and, when they are on more than one level by stairs [...]'¹⁰⁹ In one of these caves on the right bank of the river, the largest room is rectangular with a parabolic vault and a niche at one end. This type of cave, which probably functioned as a meeting hall, is found at Bāmiyān, Haibak, and Sangdara, east of Ghazni, and is datable to the seventh century A.D.¹¹⁰.

The Painting

Fragments of a large-scale painting remain on the back wall of the upper rock-cut unit (Fig. 114). The technique of painting is the same as that used in the Hindu Kush. A primary layer of coarse earth and organic materials was first applied to the rock wall, a top layer to which the paint was directly applied, consisted of more finely ground earth and organic materials plus plaster.

The painting is organized around a large central figure, which is three-quarters destroyed. At the center is a large trapezoid framing the center figure; at either side is a balcony containing royal figures without halos, making offerings to the

¹⁰⁸ Kotera, Maeda, and Miyaji, *Bāmiyān - Report of Survey in 1969*. The stone ledges at Bāmiyān are exceedingly narrow and would have been unsafe without a good deal of wooden additions. There is no indication for these additions as there is at Nigār. Also, I cannot see a reason for the nobility sitting in this location at Bāmiyān. They could not see the ceremony on the ground beneath them and the people on the ground could not see the personages on the ledge.

¹⁰⁹ Verardi, 'Some Rock-Cut Monasteries', p. 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

central figure. The arcade was supported at three points by composite animal capitals on columns. This arcade appears to be symmetrical, occupying the center two-thirds of the composition. To the far left of the central figure there are fragmentary remains of a second large-scale figure. Parts of the shoulder, elbow, and knee remain of a seated, crowned image wearing a red garment with black geometric patterns of which the right edge still exists. This area is so destroyed that it cannot be interpreted. To the proper right of this figure and slightly above it is a capital consisting of a lion's face with stylized curls under the chin and ram's horns occupying the position of the scrolls in a doric capital. The horns and lion's face form a composite animal head capital, which is painted in gold. The columns no longer exist. The capital supports a red beam, which in turn supports a balcony. All of these architectural parts are decorated with a scroll pattern painted in gold. The balcony is divided in half — a lattice work pattern to the left, and a reddish solid panel to the right.

To the proper right of the balcony, behind the red beam is an architectural element in the shape of a lion with an extended paw. The style of the lion is the same as that of the composite animal capital. The two balconies were decorated with a stylized floral pattern and painted gold. To the proper left of the lion capital is a pink-red antelope, above which are suspended five blue lotuses. To the right of a now missing column, which is to the proper left of the central figure, is a red ram in profile with large, double-rimmed gold horns depicted frontally. An elegantly drawn white bird with a blue beak and a large fan-shaped tail stripped with blue is suspended above the back of the ram. A very long ribbon floats from the bird's neck and above its head. Above the horns of the ram is a pair of white, addorsed birds. Above and to the right of the pair of birds appear the faint remains of a golden double lotus, which formed part of a halo apparently for the figure in red.

Depicted in the balcony to the left is an eroded figure with a masculine profile, long corkscrew curls falling over the shoulder, a blue jacket open at the neck, and a complex headdress with streamers floating out on the back. The right hand extended a floral offering toward the central figure. The left hand holds a gold dish piled with offerings behind and at the level of his left shoulder. In the balcony to the right of the central figure is a figure that is almost totally defaced. This figure is also in profile. In the left hand he holds a platter of offerings; the right hand holds a single large flower. The left hand's small finger is extended and wears a ring with a large blue stone. Very few other details can be discerned other than the headdress with long white streamers and the open-necked tunic. The underdrawing consisting of two semicircles, which might be interpreted as breasts, but they seem to me to be the outline of the open-necked bodice.

The central large figure occupies almost the entire vertical space at the center of the panel, which is about twelve feet. Below him there was a scene that is now destroyed. The upper portion of the figure is obliterated except for a large double halo and crown. The main components of the large headdress remain. They are a large pair of white wings enclosing a white animal face with small pointed ears depicted frontally, and large blue horns rising from the center of the brow and sweeping around and over the face of the animal. Around the crown is a red halo against a larger gold halo. The latter is rimmed in red. From the latter halo emerge six animal heads, on the left from the top down is a lion, bull, horse, and elephant. On the figure's right is a donkey or wild ass and a ram. There were probably two more animal heads below this, making a symmetrical composition. This main figure wears a white tunic with a red border, and a long sword falling diagonally across the front of the body. The scabbard is white with a red bottom section and a pointed

green tip, which rests between the feet, which are encased in long blue boots with heels. The toes hang down below the heels. The boots are decorated with an elaborate strap holding a round, probably metal, piece at the ankle. Behind the left foot is a red form that looks like a throne leg. The central figure stands in front of a proportionately large red horse, whose two front feet are visible. There is another hoofed leg slightly smaller to the right going in the opposite direction, indicating the presence of two animals. Only one leg of the other horse still exists. To the left of the horse is a small figure holding the reins and wearing a so-called Central Asian tunic. Below and next to this figure is a proportionately larger male figure wearing similar clothes. The long tunic on the larger male figure is clearly embroidered with blue rondels containing horseheads. The figure wears a short sword suspended at an oblique angle to his body from a belt. A long sword is suspended vertically from his belt at the waist.

In addition to the images we have just described, which appear not to have deteriorated since the first survey in 1924, there was also a section to the far right of the central figure which the D.A.F.A. reported as containing an image of a 'Sasanian prince.'¹¹¹ Today this area is totally faded and this image cannot be verified; only the crown, shown in profile, and the halo remains.

There are several points of disagreement between my description of the paintings and the one given by the French Delegation. Some of my observations are difficult to interpret because no known parallels exist¹¹².

¹¹¹ Godard and Hackin, *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, p. 73.

¹¹² For a more complete discussion of this monument, see Klimburg-Salter, *Dukhtar-i-Noshirwan*.

Appendix I

THE KYOTO UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION TO CENTRAL ASIA: ENUMERATION OF THE CAVES IN THE BĀMIYĀN VALLEY

I would like to thank Professor Takayasu Higuchi, Kyoto University and Director of the Kyoto University Mission, which has been surveying the Buddhist complex in the Bāmiyān Valley, for sending me the concordance between the Kyoto University system and that used here, principally derived from the original work of the D.A.F.A. The complete enumeration, as described by Professor Higuchi, reaches about 750 units. This large number is due to the fact that the Kyoto University Mission numbered each architectural unit (be it a small cell or large meeting room) separately rather than numbering each complex as did the D.A.F.A. Also, the latter only identified the decorated units while the former mission numbered all units. I have included here the numbers for only the decorated units since this is the subject of the present study. The publication of the new enumeration system is under preparation. The system for the eastern section of the decorated caves was included in 'Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān: A Stylistic Analysis', by Akira Miyaji, in *Japan-Afghanistan Joint Archaeological Survey in 1974*, The Committee of the Kyoto University Archaeological Mission to Central Asia, The University of Kyoto, 1976.

CONCORDANCE OF CAVE NUMBERING SYSTEMS

<i>French Mission with additions from Tarzi</i>	<i>Nagoya University</i>	<i>Kyoto University</i>
	East III	24
	U	33
	T	35
	Vd	38
G	G	51
F	Fa, b, c	70, 71, 72
	M	111
	L	114
A (upper)	A (upper)	119, 120, 121, 122
A (down)	A (down)	129, 130
B	Ba, c, d, f	138, 139, 140, 141
35 (now 38)-meter Buddha	East Grand Buddha	155
5	I	160
4	II	159
3	III	158
1	IV	156
6	V	161
7	VI	162
8	VII	163
C	Cb, Ca, Cd, Cc	164, 165, 166
D	D	167
	Dl	168
	Sf	171
	Se	172
	Sa	176
E1	Rd, e, b, c	200, 201, 202
	Ee	222
E	Ec	223
K	330
J	Jg	386
J	Jd	388
H	Ha	404
	Na	471
i	i	530
XI	605
XII	XIIId, a, c, b	739, 740, 741
	XIIIc, a, b	746, 747, 748
	XIVa	738
XV	XVb	733
53 (now 55)-meter Buddha	West Grand Buddha	620

Appendix II

COMPARATIVE FORMAL ANALYSIS OF THE PAINTINGS OF THE HINDU KUSH

Phase I a

Painting in the 38-meter Buddha niche — The poor surface condition of the remaining paintings indicates an inferior quality of either pigment or binding material. The entire painted surface is flaked, and the black paint delineating the details is so eroded that none of the facial features remains intact. In all of the paintings, the black paint tends to deteriorate first so that the red undercoating is revealed. In Phase I a the technical problem of securing the black color was notably unresolved — the black is really gray, paler than in other compositions from the Hindu Kush.

Rowland believed¹ that the results of the analyses of pigments from Caves B, C, and D were also relevant for the paintings in the 38-meter Buddha niche. He concluded from Gettens's technical analysis that the wall paintings in the 38-meter niche were never repainted. Investigations by the Archaeological Survey of India (see Appendix III) corroborate this hypothesis. In many figures, however, erosion of the paint is so complete that the underdrawing, which is often placed differently from the finished drawing, is clearly visible. Since the forms are in every case identical, I would conclude that the lower drawing in the 38-meter niche is a first sketch rather than the first of two major chronological stages of painting.

The organization of the composition around the medial axis of the colossal Śākyamuni sculpture and the geometric division of the pictorial space are the same in all the external niches. The treatment of space is two-dimensional; both the individual figures and the total pictorial space are planar. The central panel on the soffit over the head of Śākyamuni uses the simple compositional principle of 'above is behind.' The frozen figures are silhouetted against the blue background. The symmetrical composition is closed and static. Small secondary figures frame the central deity.

The side panels use the organizational device of a balustrade with figures. This ancient device in Indian art was popular throughout the Buddhist art of Afghanistan. In Indian and Central Asian painting (Fig. 18), the projection of the balcony and the rhythmic movement of the figures often create an illusion of depth; these effects are not found here. The latter mode of representation is found later in Niche 'i' (Fig. 3).

The style of Phase I a is relatively two-dimensional with contours achieved through color applied in broad flat areas, separated by brown or black lines. There is no indication of shading.

¹ Rowland, 'The Wall Paintings of Bāmiyān,' p. 34.

Mode 1

38-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 4). The seated Buddha form is heavy with almost square proportions. The unshaded blue garments are outlined with broad brown borders which emphasize the massiveness of the figure. The ochre-red underdrawing can be distinguished under the gray-black outlines. It would appear that the Buddha's skin was once completely covered with a gold color. The face is deteriorated, but the left hand, holding a footed cup, is a good example of the drawing: the fingers are boneless and the small finger is crooked in a distinctive mannerism. The simple (two-toned) mandorla is slightly oval. The downturned lotus petals are drawn as simple outlines with no details. Although the unique iconography has been discussed, I shall only note here Rowland's comment in his original study that this figure is recognizable as a Buddha only by its [hieratic] style².

Mode 2

The royal figures are all represented in three-quarter view. Their stiff gestures, heavy proportions, style of drawing, and artistic mannerisms are similar to the Buddhas in Mode 1. Here, however, the figures overlap which gives a slight illusion of depth. Depending on the subject, these figures present greater variety of detail, and some movement is implied through the stylized gestures (Fig. 4).

(D.3.E.) The simple almond-eyes and large ears are used for all the figures, but the long slender nose, delicate nostrils, and the coiffure are distinctly feminine. Compare to the stronger geometrically conceived features of the Mongol-looking king which are clearly distinct from the feminine features.

(D.5.W.) The physiognomy of the figure is quite different. The nose is a wedge, and a thin drooping moustache outlines the tight small mouth with a protruding underlip (Fig. 7).

Further insights are gained by comparing these representations in Mode 2 with the only example in the 38-meter niche of a face of a figure represented in Mode 1 — the 'Sun God' at the center of the composition (Figs. 50-51). The artistic conventions are the same, but the frontal position emphasizes the vacuous expression and the simplified drawing, whereas the representations of the royal figures seem more individualized.

The most meaningful stylistic analogies for Phase I a are found in the art of western Central Asia, particularly Sogdia. The most consistent comparisons can be drawn with Sogdian art, notably the second style at Pyandžikent, and particularly that used in the ritual and narrative scenes. This style has been described as basically two-dimensional and linear. The color scheme, the planar contours silhouetted against a solid background, the frozen gestures, the preference for the three-quarter view when depicting secular personages are all characteristic stylistic features of the representation of royalty in Sogdia and the eastern Iranian cultural sphere.

The following examples from Pyandžikent can be compared with the frieze of donors in the 38-meter Buddha niche: the row of seated male figures in the feast scene (although the treatment of the drapery is more plastic), Room XVI/10; the drawing of the facial features of the female figures, Room VI/1; and the head of a warrior (cf. Figs. 6 and 7). These paintings date from the seventh to eighth centuries A.D.³

² Ibid., p. 33.

³ Rowland, *The Art of Central Asia*. The head from Pyandžikent may also be compared to the head in the wall painting of Afrasiab (sixth-seventh century A.D.), Pl. 69.

While the artistic conventions used to depict these personages from Pjandžikent, Afrasiab, and Bāmiyān are the same, the details of subject matter show significant variety. An example would be the preference for certain costume details. Both so-called Sasanian and Sogdian costumes are used together in the frieze at Bāmiyān, while only the latter are found at Pyandžikent. These differences may be attributed to regional traditions, but can also be found in Kizil. Later both these types of costume occur in the art of northern Pakistan, particularly on objects that can be associated with the Šāhi of Gilgit. It is only here that the female dress is found.

Groups of royal figures in Central Asia are usually depicted in costumes with tunic and lapels (Fig. 116). The costumes of the bearded figures in Bāmiyān have been consistently referred to as Sasanian, but in fact they are also found in the art of contemporary western Central Asia, such as on metal objects, and coins. A particularly pertinent example is the royal portrait in three-quarter view which appears on coins of Vrahitigin⁴.

In discussing the royal portraits from Central Asia, Litvinskij has noted that style is often a corollary of subject matter in the Buddhist art of Central Asia, as it is in adjacent regions⁵. This also appears to be the case in Bāmiyān.

Phase I b

Painting in the 55-meter Buddha niche — The preliminary drawing is applied in red ochre, then overdrawn in brown for the secondary figures and in gold for the Buddhas. The ochre drawing has remained visible. The surface of the paint is smoother than in Phase I a, with no flakiness. The black is darker, although the black, which has a red undercoat, appears to deteriorate more quickly than the other colors.

Unfortunately, the principal figure at the center of the soffit is missing and the figures which remain on the soffit are Bodhisattvas and other heavenly personages represented in Mode 2 (Fig. 49). Buddha figures remain only on the side walls and they are all represented in Mode 1 (hieratic). This situation has occasionally been misinterpreted to mean that two different styles were used; in fact, they are two modes of representation within the same style. The more diverse the subject matter, the greater variation there is in the manner of representation of these different figure types.

The muted color scheme of Phase I b includes blue, gold, brown, red, and black. The blue, appearing darker on the soffit (perhaps because of less erosion), forms the background of the composition.

The treatment of space is essentially two-dimensional. On the soffit, however, manipulation of color and architectural forms produces certain spatial effects. Color creates a trompe l'oeil effect in the floral border and the tricolor curtains, while architecture is depicted with the same complexity found in all Hindu Kush painting. The painted forms — alternating arcades and truncated arches on short pilasters — are identical to those sculpted in stucco in the caves at the base of this niche. Like their stucco counterparts, these painted architectural forms serve as frames for the personages rather than as spatial devices.

⁴ Göbl, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*, Vol. I, pp. 192-195. Allchin and Hammond, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p. 253.

⁵ Gafurov et al., *Kushan Studies in the U.S.S.R.*

The composition of the soffit is unusually crowded; forms are stacked above each other. The deep blue background provides a sense of depth, and the total effect is similar to the late Gandhāran stelae of a Buddha preaching to a heavenly assembly. In addition to thematic and organizational similarities, specific motifs can also be compared. The unusual dome resting on a truncated arch at the top of a Gandhāran sculpture resembles a similar, unique form in the middle of the central panel of the painted soffit of the 55-meter Buddha niche. In keeping with the tendency of style to accord with subject matter, it is possible that this unique composition derives from the popular sculptural tradition long established for this theme. Thus, the Hindu Kush example would derive from the Gandhāran type.

On the vertical axis of the composition is the colossal sculpture of the Buddha. The organization of the composition is symmetrical, beginning at the top and center of the soffit and moving downward. Although individually the heavenly figures on the soffit show movement, they are constrained within their architecturally defined space and separated from each other. Their gestures and positions are not exploited to create an illusion of depth. The flying figures in the medallions do interact according to a consistent formula. The compartmentalization of each figure is more marked in the hieratic mode, where the Buddhas are enclosed in round aureoles, making the pictorial space of each figure as well as the total composition closed and tectonic. Since the representation of the figures is repetitive and accords with the subject, I shall only describe one figure of each type.

Mode 1

55-meter Buddha niche — The Buddha in padmāsana is surrounded by a five-part, perfectly round mandorla, each stripe being a different color. The figure is drawn in red and the features and edges of the form are emphasized in black. The contours of the body are softened by a gold color which does not model the form. The only shading occurs around the eye sockets and nose. The eyes are almond-shaped and rimmed in blue, with a thicker line along the bottom, and the sockets are drawn with a C-shaped curve from the inner eye, further defined by shadowing. The heavy-lidded effect is punctuated by thin, black, slightly curved brows (Fig. 48). The thin nose is not drawn but lightly modelled ending in fat nostrils like a 'pug' nose. The mouth with a full lower lip and slight smile seems too small for the perfectly round, fat-cheeked face. The ears are drawn as if seen from the side with a complex rounded design in the upper ear. The hair forms a series of symmetrical waves. The lower limbs are disproportionately long for the otherwise square body. The fingers and toes are long with the fleshy parts exaggerated. These peculiar mannerisms are more noticeable on the soffit where they occur on the Bodhisattva figures. The drapery is composed of small successive lines which are shaded around the folds of the left arm and leg to give a sense of volume. This is the same throughout the niche, but can be seen best on the east wall.

In sum, all the Buddhas are represented in the hieratic mode, frontal and symmetrical with two-dimensional schematized features. Although the drawing is free-hand, and the drapery has specified areas of plasticity, particularly under the left arm and at the left knee, a geometric simplicity characterizes the figure as a whole.

Mode 2

The technique of drawing is the same as for the previous paintings. The canon of proportions is, however, more elongated frequently giving a more elegant effect.

All the figures are shown in three-quarter view, some twisting awkwardly. This movement of the torso is demonstrated by a displaced cross-shaped navel. The legs and arms dangle puppet-like. Sometimes the limbs appear backward. A rather harsh attempt at chiaroscuro is achieved by thickening the lines that define the contours and occasionally the body parts. These shaded outlines serve to define shape rather than impart volume. When this manner is used for the dancing girl it appears particularly sensuous because of the more voluptuous Indian form used for this figure type (Fig. 117). The adroit draftmanship which is peculiar to Bāmiyān accomplishes the most exquisite effects usually in this mode. For example, in the drawing of the secondary divinity in the lower center of the soffit (Fig. 8), the manner of forming the eye is the same as described above. The face is in three-quarter view, showing a beautiful long slender nose which is attached with a single line to the left eyebrow. A small loop attaches the bottom of the nostril to the sensuous mouth (as compared with the circle drawn above the mouth for the Buddha figures).

The flying divinities on the west wall are in the same mode of representation as the previous figure (Fig. 13). The treatment of the drapery is essentially the same with color defining the form. Note particularly the definition of the fishtail ends of the scarf. The tail is composed of three diamond shapes which become progressively larger. Plasticity is suggested through double-shaded lines.

The figures in the medallions on the east wall (Fig. 31) are difficult to identify, except for the first medallion toward the outside, which is a local variant of Pharo-Vaiśravaṇa. There is, however, a heavy abstract shading of the figures in the other medallions that does not appear elsewhere. As the subject matter is also unique, this may again be an example of the style being related to the subject.

The different modes of representation according to the subject matter within the same composition also characterizes painting in Central Asia and northwest India in the seventh and eighth centuries. A particularly striking parallel occurs in a now lost painting from Khotan (Kha. i.C. 0097). Williams's description of this composition could serve as well for the composition that we have just described at Bāmiyān:

Here the central Buddha belongs to the frontal, geometrizing style. The attendant Bodhisattvas show more sophistication, and their linear features are as 'Chinese' as any of the panels Bussagli cites. Their half-nude bodies in slight *tribhaṅga* pose, however, belong to the Ajantesque Indian style [...] All that is lacking to confound every category is a donor figure in a tunic or 'Persian' dress, and it has been shown that this element commonly occurred at the bottom of a wall at the feet of just such a Buddhist configuration⁶.

In fact, donor figures at Bāmiyān are also represented in so-called 'Persian dress' (what I call eastern Iranian) and in Central Asian style. Williams has also compared the donor figure from a painting in the 55-meter Buddha niche (Fig. 116), to her figure 64 from Khotan⁷.

The 'Indian' style just described at Khotan and Bāmiyān, which is used to depict dancing girls and enthroned deities in *lalitāsana*, is also employed in Kizil. One example, from the Treasure Cave, Kizil, shows the dance of Queen Candraprabha (Fig. 9). A comparison of this latter painting with the painting on the soffit of the 55-meter Buddha reveals some startling similarities. The outline of the forms of the seated figures and the dancing figure are quite close to the Bāmiyān counterparts.

⁶ Williams, *Khotanese Painting*, p. 134.

⁷ Ibid., p. 156.

The treatment of volume, however, differs: the Bāmiyān figures are more sensuous, as one would expect from the closer proximity of this site to India. Also, the Indian origin of the figural type is apparent in the concern for volume or relief which thus influenced the manner of representation. In the Bāmiyān and Kizil examples, the broad emphatic lines define form rather than volume, and create surface patterns rather than an illusion of plasticity. Certain other features of the Bāmiyān and Kizil paintings are similar: the shape of the throne, the style of female dress, and the hanging foot with upturned soles and fleshy toes. The most recent study of the paintings from Kizil notes that the last phase of painting prior to the Chinese conquest of 647 is characterized by a new influx of Indian influence. The painting comparable to that on the soffit of the 55-meter Buddha is attributed to this phase which is dated just before the middle of the seventh century⁸.

A painting from Dandan-Oilik (Fig. 2) has been attributed to the early eighth century⁹. The stylistic features which are considered unique at Khotan are precisely those which also appear at Bāmiyān. These features are traced to Sogdian art, to which I have also compared features of Phase I a. Two characteristics Williams found in this Khotanese phase of painting are also found in Phase I b at Bāmiyān. She writes that, 'The illusionistically shaded drapery of the central seated figure may be related to forms which occur at Pyandžikent and ultimately derived from Sasanian conventions. The firm, 'iron-wire' line appears also in Sogdian painting. Here, this line is used very subtly to suggest the roundness of the body [...]'¹⁰ This 'illusionistically shaded drapery' and 'iron-wire line' are both found at Bāmiyān. The latter characteristic is used with particular vigor in Phase II.

The hieratic mode of Phase I b can also be compared with the 'frontal geometrizing style' from Khotan mentioned above. The strongest analogies occur in a painting from Khotan, from Farhād-Bēg-Yailaki. Williams considers this style anomalous in Khotanese painting. The solidity and slightly more volumetric style as well as certain mannerisms, particularly those used to depict the Hāritī from Farhād-Bēg-Yailaki, such as the drawing of the eyes, mouth, and crooked little finger, can be compared to Bāmiyān. The Hāritī is dated to the end of the seventh century¹¹.

Elongation of the figures, another feature of Mode 2, is also noticed by Bussagli in the art of Sogdia and Kucha. He finds the origin of this mannerism in Sogdia¹². Since this feature is common to all the regional variations of post-Gupta art in India, it appears to be an evolutionary rather than a regional phenomenon.

Phase II a

This group is characterized by a linear style, the figures are delineated by a thin, wiry line. The simplified drawing creates a geometrized anatomy. Color is applied on flat broad areas. There is no attempt at chiaroscuro. Thus, the optical effects are achieved through a manipulation of linear contours and flat areas of color.

⁸ M. Klimburg, 'Die Entwicklung des 2. indo-iranischen Stils von Kutscha,' p. 322 (1974).

⁹ Williams, 'The Iconography of Khotanese Painting,' pp. 111-112. For a more recent study see Whitfield, *The Stein Collection*, who follows Stein's earlier dates, to the 6th century.

¹⁰ Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

¹² M. Bussagli, *Painting of Central Asia*, p. 48.

Unfortunately, the examples of this style are either the most faded and indistinct (such as H), incomplete (such as at Fondukistān), or difficult to reach (such as K).

Mode 1

Cave K — The central figure (Fig. 5) is an example of the hieratic mode of representation in this subdivision. As now seen in situ, the modelling of the figure does not exist as drawn by Carl¹³. Cave K is considered the earliest paintings in this phase.

The figure is slightly more volumetric than other figures in this subdivision of this phase. The Maitreya, along with other extant examples, is painted with the same earth tones and blue, red, and gold, which also characterized Phase I. Since the number of examples of this Phase is so limited, I hesitate to consider this color scheme a particular attribute of this group.

Mode 2

Niche H — Figures which have a particularly bland expression and androgynous appearance; an example is the flying deities in niche H (Fig. 12). This composition may be compared to the flying deities in the 55-meter Buddha niche (Phase I b) from which the composition in H derives. None of the Indianizing tendencies, which in the earlier composition created a relative plasticity, appear in H. Certain mannerisms are similar in both the 55-meter Buddha niche painting and niche H such as the long almond-shaped eye with the C-curve drawn from the inner eye, although the technique of intensifying the eye with a line of blue is missing in H. The upturned soles of the feet and the deep-set cross-shaped navel have become even more exaggerated in H. In H the composition and movement is simpler and the details of jewelry, coiffure, and drapery are quite limited.

Niche E, Fondukistān — The Maitreya (Fig. 14) also provides an example of Mode 2. A hard wiry line creates round limbs and simple planar contours. The delineation of the face and the drapery is both more abstract and more decorative than the paintings in H.

This simple linear style can also be found in the drawings of most of the rows of seated Buddhas at Bāmiyān, and at Khotan, and reflects a mechanical repetitive manner of drawing mass-produced figures.

Parallels for these figures are difficult to establish. The wiry outlines, androgynous appearance, and movement of the body seem closest to the characteristics of the standing Bodhisattvas on two of the Gilgit covers (Figs. 1, 11). The Gilgit examples more clearly relate to the Fondukistān figure which, as we have noted, appears to be a slightly later development of this style than the figures of the flying deities in H. The Gilgit Bodhisattvas are attributed to ca. late seventh or early eighth century¹⁴. The Fondukistān painting may be dated ca. 700 on archaeological grounds. It falls between the sub-groups and marks the transition to Phase II b.

However, comparison can be drawn for the example of Mode 1, Phase II a, since the figures concerned share not only common stylistic features but also details of

¹³ Rowland, *Art of Central Asia*, fig. 98.

¹⁴ Williams, *Khotanese Painting*, pp. 154, 253, fn. 35. Williams successfully refutes Banerjee's attribution of a ninth-tenth century date for these paintings (P. Banerjee, 'Painted Wooden Covers of Two Gilgit Manuscripts,' pp. 114-118).

subject matter. The enthroned Maitreya in Cave K can be compared with the representation of this same subject in the Cave of the Musicians in Kizil (Fig. 17). The Maitreya from the Cave of the Musicians in Kizil is dated to the end of the second Indo-Iranian style just prior to the Chinese invasion in 647-648¹⁵. The broad heavy proportions of the head, the thick neck and bull-like chest narrowing to a graceful waist, and the position of the legs are all quite similar. The Kizil example, however, is more volumetric.

The Cave K Maitreya is in some ways stylistically closer to the examples in Mode 1, Phase I b (Fig. 5). The density of the figure is emphasized by a similar use of the same costume details as found in Kizil. The proportionately large tripartite crown, and the four flat white streamers that stand out from the side rosettes like spokes, exaggerate the breadth of the head. The broad flat necklace emphasizes the squat neck, and the round overlay of the long shawl and two-colored scarf attached at the chest by an arrow-shaped brooch extends the width of the shoulders. The shape of the streamers enclosed within the mandorlas emphasizes the motionless and isolated character of both figures. The planar quality of the figures is enhanced by the use of line rather than shading to delineate the drapery.

This example of Mode 1, Phase II a is the only figure that still maintains some of the heaviness of the upper body associated with the same Mode of Phase I b. This may be a function of the mode itself, reflecting the long tradition in Gandhāran art of these heavier proportions for the hieratic mode, particularly notable in the Buddha figures from Kapiśa and Kunduz. On the other hand, the continued reliance on the same palette may also indicate that this composition is closer in date than others at Bāmiyān to Phase I b.

The theme provides another important point of comparison between these paintings. In the Kizil example, the central deity is surrounded by secondary figures; the total composition represents the deity and his assembly in the heaven in which the deity is residing. In Cave K, Maitreya is represented alone; surrounding figures and secondary iconographic details (with the exception of the throne) are absent. This process of eliminating secondary figures and pictorial details is characteristic of Phase II ('the Bāmiyān Style') and contrasts with Phase I where the deities in the central painted panels retain their attendants. The composition preferred in the Bāmiyān style emphasizes the spaceless and timeless quality of the deity.

Phase II b

The development of the technique of painting, already noted in Phase I, toward a smoother, more durable surface progressed further in Phase II. Lacking chemical analyses of the painting in which this new technique was employed, I can only quote Hackin's observations which were formulated when he removed the paintings in Kakrak from their original location:

[Le] peu qui subsiste encore de l'ornementation des panneaux A à G nous montre au contraire [i.e., to the more simple technique on the dome] une gamme de teintes assourdis fixées, semble-t-il, à l'aide d'un vernis particulièrement consistant, très riche en gomme-résine. Le peintre ne semble d'ailleurs pas s'être limité à l'emploi d'un vernis fixatif; la peinture elle-même paraît être d'une pâte

¹⁵ Klimburg, 'Die Entwicklung' (1974), pp. 322-324. The disruptive influence of the Chinese invasion at Kizil, first noted in this study, has important repercussions for other Central Asian sites as well.

plus épaisse, précaution pleinement justifiée par le fait que cette partie de la grotte était infiniment plus exposée aux frottements que la coupole¹⁶.

This technique appears to be the same as that which I noted in Cave N, Bāmiyān, which Hackin did not visit. It may not be a coincidence that both extant examples of this technique are paintings not exposed to the elements. The examples for Phase II a, c, d come from external niches or, in the case of Folādi, caves that have long been exposed to the elements. The preparation of the ground for painting was the same as in Phase I, but it seems that the binding medium and the preparation of the paint were different.

A greater variety of colors was used in this phase, with the introduction of vermillion and light green. Colors were used decoratively in order to achieve a uniform dramatic effect throughout each composition.

Unlike the previous subdivision, this group is represented by, among other examples, two almost complete visual configurations, Niche 'i' and Kakrak (Figs. 3, 118). The compositions are flat, symmetrical, and geometric. Despite the use of an architectural frame to enclose the figures, there is no illusion of depth. The isolation of the architecture, along with the plain blue background against which the figures are silhouetted, prevent the architectural forms from creating a pictorial dimension. Both compositions follow the same system of organization described in Phase I¹⁷.

In Cave N, the composition is too fragmentary to indicate the spatial concept (Fig. 86). It should be noted that the figures that do seem spatially related to one another (the only instance in Phase II) are actually quite small in proportion to the entire composition and occupy the top of the wall, therefore serving the function of a border.

Blue is used once again in Kakrak and in Niche 'i' for the background of the composition, which fills the entire architectural unit, serving to emphasize the isolation of each figure and the calculated balance of independent elements, which are themselves categorically defined (Figs. 26, 118).

The principle underlying the variations within this subdivision is the attempt to create greater plasticity through manipulation of tone, contour line, and gesture. Elongation of the forms and more graceful treatment of limbs create more elegant figures than those in Phase I and Phase II d. The techniques employed result in the definition of form through contours that are achieved by modulations of light and dark, or broad emphatic color to define form while the previous subdivision depended completely on line drawing. The drapery becomes quite complex, but the multiple lines create movement rather than the illusion of volume. Rowland compares one of the sculpted Bodhisattvas at Fondukistān to an unspecified Bāmiyān painting: the refinement and softness he attributes to the Fondukistān sculpture characterizes Phase II b as well¹⁸.

Mode 1

Kakrak — A Buddha image occupies the center of one of the maṇḍala-like compositions located on the wall (Fig. 26). The canon of proportions appears more elon-

¹⁶ Hackin and Carl, *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Bāmiyān*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁷ In 'i' the balconied figures serve as a frame for the central panel in the soffit. At Kakrak the truncated arches on the pillars occupied the drum zone and this bordered the composition in the dome which contained a seated crowned Bodhisattva, Maitreya.

¹⁸ Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 180.

gated here than in the Phase I and Phase II a examples cited above. Yet the total impression of the upper body is still quite solid. The head and ears have become longer, but the cheeks remain flat and round. The form of the eyes is the same as that described in Phase I b. The modelling around the eyes and nose, however, which suggested plasticity in Phase I b, has been replaced by a more decorative and diagrammatic use of color. The C-curve is a thin red line; the eyes are darkly outlined in black and then emphasized below with red. The eyebrows and mouth are now thin to the point of caricature. In the absence of shading, the nose is represented by two long thin lines ending in the characteristic 'pug'-shaped nostrils. All the other anatomical details — the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the long ears — are drawn with swift red lines.

A succession of thin parallel lines form the drapery, with particularly uneven movement around the bent limbs on the left side. The upturned petals of the lotus seat have been reduced to a white and red diagrammatic pattern.

Mode 2

Niche 'i', Bāmiyān Buddha (Fig. 87) — The longer canon of proportions is more noticeable than in the preceding example. The slight tilt of the head and the graceful gestures suggest an elegant languor. Although all the faces in the painting in Niche 'i' are eroded, one can appreciate the attempt to render a delicate skin tone and to emphasize details of the anatomy by bands of darker pigment. This is particularly clear in the standing Bodhisattva on the lower wall where the shading emphasizes the skin above the dhoti. It is interesting to compare the seated Buddha (Fig. 87) with a similar figure at Kakrak (Fig. 118). The outlines of the figures are similar. The facial features are in both cases the same as for Mode 1, but the three-quarter view allows them to be drawn in an even more exaggerated, almost comical fashion.

The use of red around the eyes and hairline, seen at Kakrak, is also found in Cave N. The effect in N is less harsh, however, and the drawing, particularly the quality of the line, for example the outlines of the ears and mouth, is more refined. This is particularly true of the fine line drawing of the drapery.

In Mode 2, Cave N, and Niche 'i', the calligraphic line delineating the drapery achieves an almost baroque complexity. The drapery of the figures in N and of the standing Buddha in the ambulatory of Niche 'i' (Fig. 88) is drawn with a thin brush. The use of thin double lines to draw the folds creates a graceful geometric pattern. At a small area under the left arm, the drapery pattern evolves to a complex wave-like design.

The lotus seat of the Bodhisattva at Kakrak (Fig. 118) is identical to the lotus of the Buddha figure represented in Mode 1, except that the petals turn downward.

No totally satisfactory parallels from other sites can be offered for the paintings just described. But there are some points of comparison, such as the manner in which thin lines define the drapery (Fig. 88); a similar mannerism is found at Kirish, Kucha in the Cave of the Preta (Fig. 28). Here the drapery of the Buddha figures on the dome consists of thin lines which form decorative swirls under the left arm; there is no shading.

In general, the paintings in this phase can be seen as a development from the earlier paintings from the Hindu Kush. I have noted that the motifs used for the eyes and anatomical details are already found in Phase I a. However, in Phase II b the use of arbitrary chiaroscuro, or the occasional attempts at plasticity, combine with the more patterned treatment of the body (for example, the alternating use of red and black) to make these figures more schematized than those seen in Phase

I. The calligraphic line of the drapery creates movement without the illusion of volume. As I will demonstrate, the Bāmiyān Style tends toward increasing schematization. The contours which were soft and broad in Phase I b (Mode 2) become more decorative in this group and congeal into linear patterns as seen in examples from the last two chronological subdivisions.

Beyond the Hindu Kush, the only comparisons for Phase II b are to some Kashmiri sculptures of the late seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries A.D. Stylistic comparison between painting and sculpture is extremely problematic and is best avoided if possible. The absence of Kashmiri paintings leaves us with no choice. In addition, the sculpture from Fondukistān can be related quite clearly to this subdivision of Hindu Kush paintings. The remarkable similarity between the sculptures from Fondukistān and those from Akhnur and Ushkur in Kashmir have been noted by every scholar discussing this period. A group of clay sculptures found in Peshawar and now in the British Museum can also be added to this group. All of these pieces can be dated to the early eighth century¹⁹. There are both formal and iconographic similarities between the art of Fondukistān, contemporary sculptures from Kashmir, and Phase II b Hindu Kush painting.

Phase II c and d

These subdivisions are characterized by the same aesthetic principles. The two components of Phase II c style, which were used earlier are the 'iron-wire' drawing characteristic of Phase II a and the definition of form through bands of color found in Phase II b. These two components are synthesized in Phase II c to produce an 'original manner';²⁰ here the linear quality of the Bāmiyān Style finds its most dramatic and decorative expression.

In Phase II c the organization of space, compositional devices, and individual motifs are precisely the same as those throughout the paintings of Phase II. However, the intensified conventionalization of the individual figures emphasizes their spacelessness and the hieratic character of the total composition.

The paintings of Phase II d demonstrate an evolution of the diagrammatic and planar tendencies within the Bāmiyān Style. The same contours which are defined by an unrealistic chiaroscuro in Phase II c become frozen into purely linear patterns in Phase II d. In neither subdivision is a distinction made between anatomical outlines, highlights, and shadows. The only difference is the inversion of the colors used in Phase II c (dark body, white outlines) in Phase II d, thus denying the viewer any hint of reality and transforming the deities into symbolic diagrams. In Phase II c the garments are represented as complex abstract forms which ignore both volume and perspective. In Phase II d the abstractions are reduced to surface patterns devoid of the decorative flair found in the previous subdivision.

¹⁹ The sculptures from Peshawar are published by Barrett, 'Sculptures of the Shāhi Period,' pp. 54-59. This subdivision of the Bāmiyān style is the only variation expressing an interest in plasticity. In the Fondukistān sculptures one finds also a modal distinction between the treatment of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The surface of the former is quite flat. The drapery being incised. It is the figures of the smaller attendant deities, softer and more voluptuous, which are most frequently published as representative of Fondukistān sculpture. In fact, as at Bāmiyān, these figures are representative only of Mode 2.

²⁰ Rowland, *Art and Architecture*, p. 180.

Mode 1, Phase II c

The central figure in Niche E (Figs. 15, 77, 78) is the most iconic and heraldic image at Bāmiyān. The diagrammatic effects achieved by the thick contour lines, and the arbitrary patterns accomplished by the vivid colors applied in flat geometric areas, combine to create an aesthetically and spiritually compelling image.

The background of the entire architectural unit is again painted a brilliant blue, and the central image on the soffit is framed by architecture. The canon of proportions is long, particularly in the torso, the bottom half seeming squatter. Above broad sloping shoulders, the thick neck supports a rather slender head with broad flat cheeks. The long and slender arms have relatively large hands.

The forms used to define the facial features are the same as those seen throughout Bāmiyān, but here the lines are thinner and the effect more geometric. The eyes are again rimmed at the bottom with a vivid blue line, although the C-curve drawn from the inner eye is more wiry and shorter than earlier examples. The long, thin eyebrows and long nose drawn by two parallel lines are the same as seen elsewhere at Bāmiyān. There is no shading around the nose and eye area, as was seen earlier in Phase I b.

It is interesting to compare the schematized drapery ends in this figure to the similar forms in Phase I b (Fig. 13). While the outlines are similar, the earlier example showed some attempt at volume through shading. In Niche E these same patterns become geometric through the alternation of colors rather than the manipulation of line and shade. There is now a total elimination of narrative details: the Cave K Maitreya figure (Fig. 5), Phase II a, is still enthroned, while here the Maitreya of niche E is suspended over a rainbow against a limitless heaven.

Mode 1, Phase II d

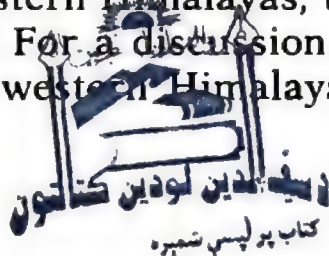
Folādi, Figs. 16 and 107 — A comparison with Mode 1, Phase II c in Niche E (Fig. 15) allows us to understand both the similarities and the development of formal components characteristic of Phases II c and d. As in Bāmiyān Niche E, so also at Folādi, a seated frontal hieratic, crowned and jewelled figure originally occupied the center of a composition. In Phase II c there is a definition of contour and form by broad outlines whose intensity of color diminishes toward the center of the anatomical compartment. Comparing Fig. 80 from Niche E Bāmiyān with Fig. 16 from Folādi, we can see that the thick dark contour lines of Phase II c become the thin hard white lines of Phase II d. The forms defined in these two examples are, however, the same. The exaggerated drawing of the curve of the right arm into the elbow, the accentuation of the round fleshy parts of the hand, the lines at the neck, the outline of the hairline which comes to a barely perceptible point at the center, the convolutions of the upper ear, and the long feet with rounded upturned toes are characteristic of this style. The center of the chest (where the pectoral muscles would be) is shaded in E; at Folādi this area is emphasized by a śrīvatsa. Even the conception of the monastic gown is the same. The undergarment is distinctly indicated, as in the previous subdivision, and the curve coming from the right armpit is accentuated. As noted above, the play of the drapery patterns, which is marked in Niche E, is missing (or eroded) at Folādi. The lotus seat is not visible at Folādi, but in Niche E it takes the same abstract red-and-white form as noted in Phase II b.

Mode 2, Phase II c and d

Niche E, Phase II c (Fig. 79). This figure has the same elegance associated with this mode throughout the Hindu Kush. The artistic conventions, however, are the same as those used in Mode 1. The movement of the head and the gestures of the long slender fingers are more mannered than in Mode 1. The head, *uṣṇīṣa*, and ears have a more spherical than ovoid appearance in this mode.

There is no example of Mode 2, Phase II d at Folādi or elsewhere in the Buddhist art of the Hindu Kush. It is also possible that only the hieratic mode was used, possibly because it was considered more suitable for the complete abstraction of the human form represented at Folādi.

This last phase of painting in the Hindu Kush can be seen as a precursor to the earliest phase of painting extant in the western Himalayas, the 'du-khang at Tapho in the Spiti Valley now in India (Fig. 20). For a discussion of the relationship between the art of the Hindu Kush and the western Himalayas, see chapter VI.



Appendix III

RESTORATION OF THE BĀMIYĀN BUDDHAS

by
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Bāmiyān, being situated at a high altitude, receives heavy snowfall annually. When the snow starts melting, the water flows on the façade eroding the not-so-hard conglomerate rock causing deep scars, with the space between the eroded portion standing like a spire or peak.

The conglomerate is a mixture of heterogeneous materials like pebbles, gravel, sand and clay with layers of sandstone blocks deposited alternately. The pebliferous layers are comprised of red sand, clay, and white and yellowish moles. The pebbles are variously quartz, quartzite, schist, sandstone, and limestone; the cementing material is markedly clayey. At the foot of the hill large deposits of pebbles show that chunks of rock were toppled down by earthquake shocks and gradually the clayey cementing material was washed away leaving behind the loose pebbles. According to geologists, a good portion of the original façade, when the caves were scooped out of the rock, has been eroded away due to the combined actions of snow and seismic shocks.

According to the seismological investigations carried out, the Hindu Kush area appears to be the most vulnerable to frequent and severe shocks. The whole of the north-east corner of the country and the Kabul Valley suffer severe earthquakes. The earthquake zone forms a big arc passing through the area in the vicinity of Mazar-i Sharif in the north and Ghazni in the east. In the past, Bāmiyān also appears to have experienced shocks, which produced several cracks in the ceilings of the niches of the two Buddhas. These cracks, over fifteen hundred years old, were filled in from the top with clay, carried by the snow-water, and were subsequently plastered over by the Buddhists at the bottom before painting the ceiling. The greatest damage to the niche of the small Buddha was caused, some fifty years back, by a shock that produced a major crack, which ran from the east along the cliff and travelled beyond the caves through the west wall of the niche. In course of time, the cracked portion of the west wall was separated from the parent body and several cracks, appearing on its inner face, lent it a shattered look. The gap in the staircase, inside the wall, was wide enough to swallow a visitor near the bottom. Some steps were missing and the space was blocked by the twentieth century buttress wall. The staircase was, therefore, abandoned.

The Condition before Restoration

Before taking up the conservation work, the shrines were found encumbered with vestiges of modern additions. In 1956 an Indian Mission while visiting Bāmiyān

saw a mud wall built up in front of the east Buddha and various shrines were under occupation. Similarly, the front of the west Buddha was walled up and rooms constructed for a granary. But the accretionary constructions were demolished subsequently and the occupants vacated. After clearance of the debris the damaged feet of both the statues were exposed. New calculations revealed that the 35-meter small Buddha measured 38 meters and 53-meter big Buddha was 55 meters.

The walls and the ceiling of the shrines had extensive remains of paintings. These paintings suffered considerably owing to both physical and chemical weathering. The pigment became loose and flaky; the plaster carrying the paintings was found to be very weak and at places has come off the rock surface. Deposits of sooty and tarry matter, dust and dirt, nests of insects, etc. caused much damage to the paintings. In certain cases the murals were covered with a layer of mud plaster. The murals within reach of the occupants of the shrines were mostly defaced. The paintings on the curvilinear ceiling of the main Buddha niches which were beyond reach, seem to have served for some as targets for shooting, as scores of bullets and a few iron arrow-heads were found lodged in the plaster and rock. However, with the growing awareness of the value of the nation's cultural heritage all acts of human vandalism were checked.

Drainage to Control Erosion

Since snow-water flowing on the façade of the main shrines of the two Buddhas was causing continuous erosion, restoration measures had necessarily to start with controlling the deleterious action. At the rock-roof a network of drainage systems had to be provided to carry the water away from the façade. Although construction of surface drains in masonry is not an intricate job, it certainly was an arduous task to carry building materials up the hill without the aid of modern machines like a crane or a lift; loads of materials had to be lifted on the back of men and donkeys.

East Great Buddha

The paintings on the ceiling of the niche of the east great Buddha suggest that about a meter of the rock façade was missing. To stop further loss of the painted surface and to mend the damage, the rock ledge was restored by a meter with the face sloped out to serve as a drip course. Dripping water from the edge of the ceiling, used to flow inside the niche and settle on the chest of the Buddha thus washing away a portion of the robe in plaster. Restoration of the outer edge of the ceiling checked this erosion.

The main and difficult task around the east Buddha was to secure the severed piece of rock in position and to save the image from being exposed to the actions of weather. This was done by filling in the entire length of the fissure with cement-concrete duly reinforced with a network of mild steel rods, anchored well inside the rock, to hold the severed portion in position. Around this chunk, belts of flat iron bars were further introduced, for additional grip, duly anchored in the compact rock of the back wall.

Having secured the fractured mass of rock in position, the buttress wall was treated. The wall which was resting on a shallow base laid on disintegrated soft rock, had to be strengthened by adding a masonry toe-wall. Inside the masonry filling, reinforcement steel rods were provided, from the base of the toe-wall, to act

as a columnar support and to establish a bonding between the new work with the old. The old wall was then trimmed and the entire surface covered with cement-concrete plaster, in a manner so as to simulate the undulated rock surface. The use of 'cut blocks' of rock in the support was suggested by a UNESCO expert. But masonry with cement-concrete plaster was used, in preference to cut blocks of rock, mainly for the reason that by its strength, homogeneity, and mass it was more durable and a more suitable match with the irregular surface and contour of the rock. In the case of the Nubian monuments in Egypt, the precious stone carvings along with the shrines were to be preserved, so the entire mass of rock was sawn into blocks, which were transported to the new site and reassembled there. While at Bāmiyān the main job was to secure the detached mass of rock by providing 'suitably fashioned' support that would not interfere with the general disposition of the rock façade, either in shape or in fabric, yet it would remain separated from the original rock.

The original entrance to the staircase, which was blocked, was opened up and the decayed steps were reconditioned. At a higher level, the rock-cut steps for a height of about two meters were missing and so the staircase could not be used. A new series of steps was, therefore, constructed at that place by scooping out the masonry of the buttress wall. The old staircase was thereby restored for ascent right up to the top.

At the ground floor, the shrines in the walls of the three sides have been reconditioned by removing the modern accretions and repairing the damaged portions. The topless shrine in the east wall, on the outer edge, has been restored to utilize the roof top to support the overhanging portion of the rock above it.

The image of the east great Buddha, like the west great Buddha has been carved out of the rock in alto-relievo, but the arms appear to have been built up with wooden armatures. In the grooves of the arms of the small Buddha were found, during repairs, remains of the wood in a charred condition. The image was plastered with layers of stucco which was damaged at places (by snow-drift), especially in the region above the chest. The exposed rock surface of the chest was treated with a layer of plaster and the folds of the garment were repaired with a rough surface, as it would look without its finishing coat of plaster. Even in mending the patches, the repaired surfaces have been finished to look weathered; the broken edge of the stucco plaster has been filleted to halt any further disintegration. Such restraints were exercised mainly with a view to respecting the 'traditional look' of the weathered and damaged image. Similarly, only the barest minimum repairs have been carried out to the damaged feet without effecting any material change in the general look.

The details of the paintings could be observed, for the first time, from a high scaffolding erected for the preservation work. A closer inspection of the paintings further revealed evidence for two stages of underdrawing. The outlines of the face of the sun-god were drawn twice, first with light lines of red-ochre and then finally with bluish grey. The marks of unsure hands could be detected elsewhere also. But at the same time the drawing of the Buddha figures seemed more confident. Some of these painted figures were executed beautifully.

West Great Buddha

In the case of the west great Buddha the first job also was to regulate the courses of snow-water to make the rock façade of the niche of the Buddha free from the flow of water and stop the resultant erosion.

A trial trench dug behind the right foot revealed that the bottom of the feet each rested on a lotus-like raised pedestal. With the bottom portion added, the image measured 55 meters, i.e. taller by 2 meters. The image of the west Buddha (55 m.) reportedly sustained damages from cannon balls shot at it by Jenghis Khan and later by Aurangzeb. To begin with, the feet were stabilized and finished with a rough indefinite shape. The overhanging portion of the right leg was then given a support from below by a cantilever, which was made to merge with the rock.

The walls and the ceiling of these shrines in this area had extensive remains of paintings. These paintings suffered considerable damages owing to both physical and chemical weathering. The murals within reach of the occupants of the shrines were mostly defaced. Most of the figures were riddled with holes, which were filled in with plaster of Paris in 1922-23. All these patches were redone with the same type of mortar duly tinted. The murals were cleaned, the flaky layer of pigment fixed back to the ground, and the process of preservation was completed by applying a coat of preservative on the murals.

The Faces of the Buddhas

There has been much speculation about the nature of the faces of the two Buddhas; various theories were propounded as both of them have a vertical cut from the forehead to the lower lip. Close observation, during the execution of restorations, revealed that the faces were modelled with wooden frames. A chase was cut in the depression of the rock behind the lower lip of each face, to receive the basal wooden beam on which were erected vertical posts for support of the horizontal stakes tied to them according to the required shape of the face. The other end of the horizontal stakes was made to rest on the rock for which rows of grooves in the vertical face are still visible. Pieces of charcoal and charred wood of the wooden frame of the face were recovered from the crevices where one could not reach without an elaborate scaffolding as was erected for the restoration work. Thus, a much debated riddle of the nature of the face was solved.

Conclusions

It may be mentioned that in carrying out the restorations on the above-mentioned images and all the units at Bāmiyān, the internationally accepted policy laid out in the 'Venice Charter' by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (as practised in India for many years) was strictly followed. In archaeological restorations, the mutilated images are not renewed, nor the missing paintings replaced with new ones. Our goal was to preserve the great works of art in their present forms by such measures that would stop further deterioration. Our intention was to respect the original artistic creation, as well as to preserve the whole gamut of its history as it is written across the monument. The various mutilations reflect both the material environment and the long period of history to which the sculptures have born witness.

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Fig. 9 - Kizil. Treasure Cave.



Fig. 10 - Khotan. Fragment of Buddha.



Fig. 11 - Gilgit manuscript covers.

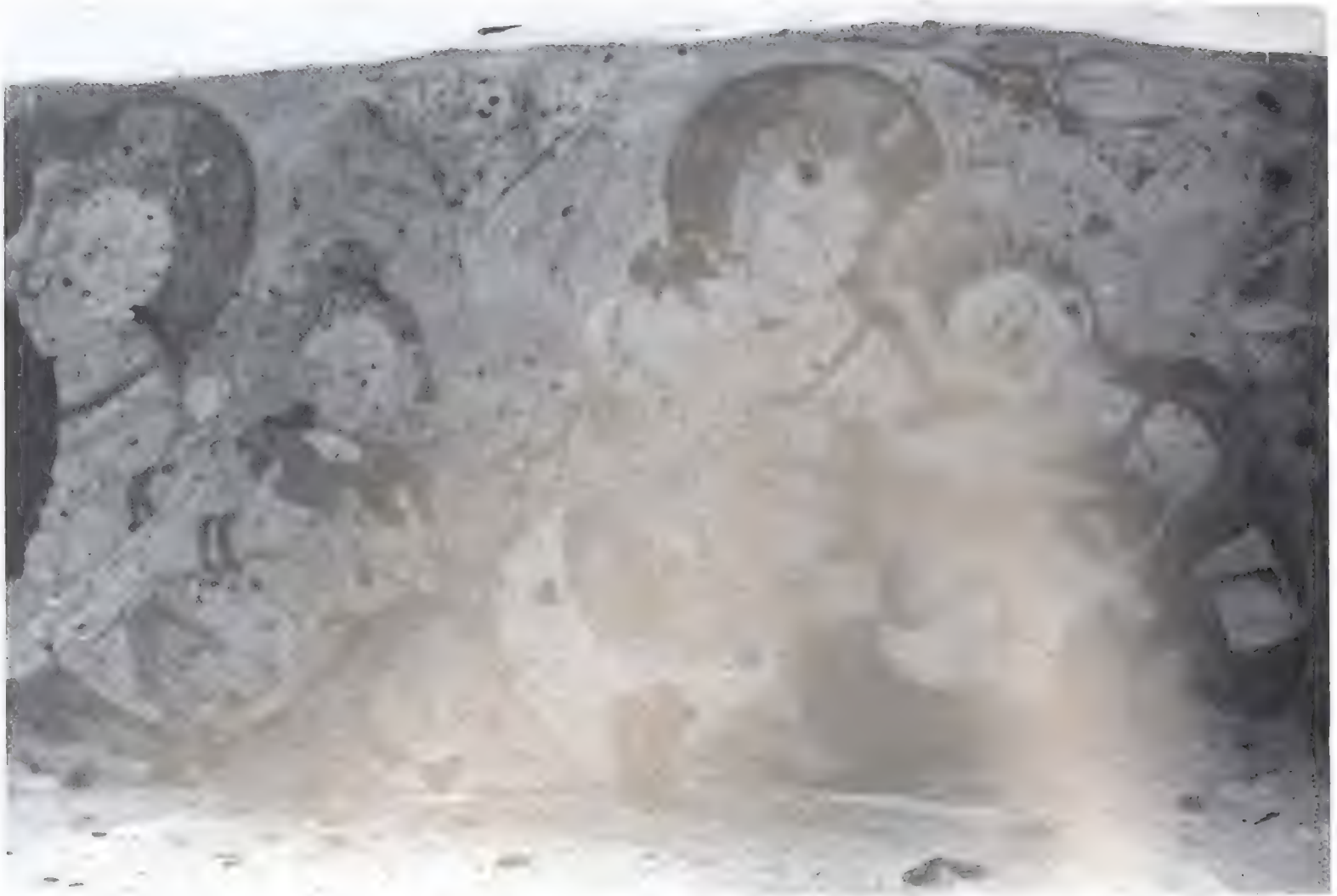


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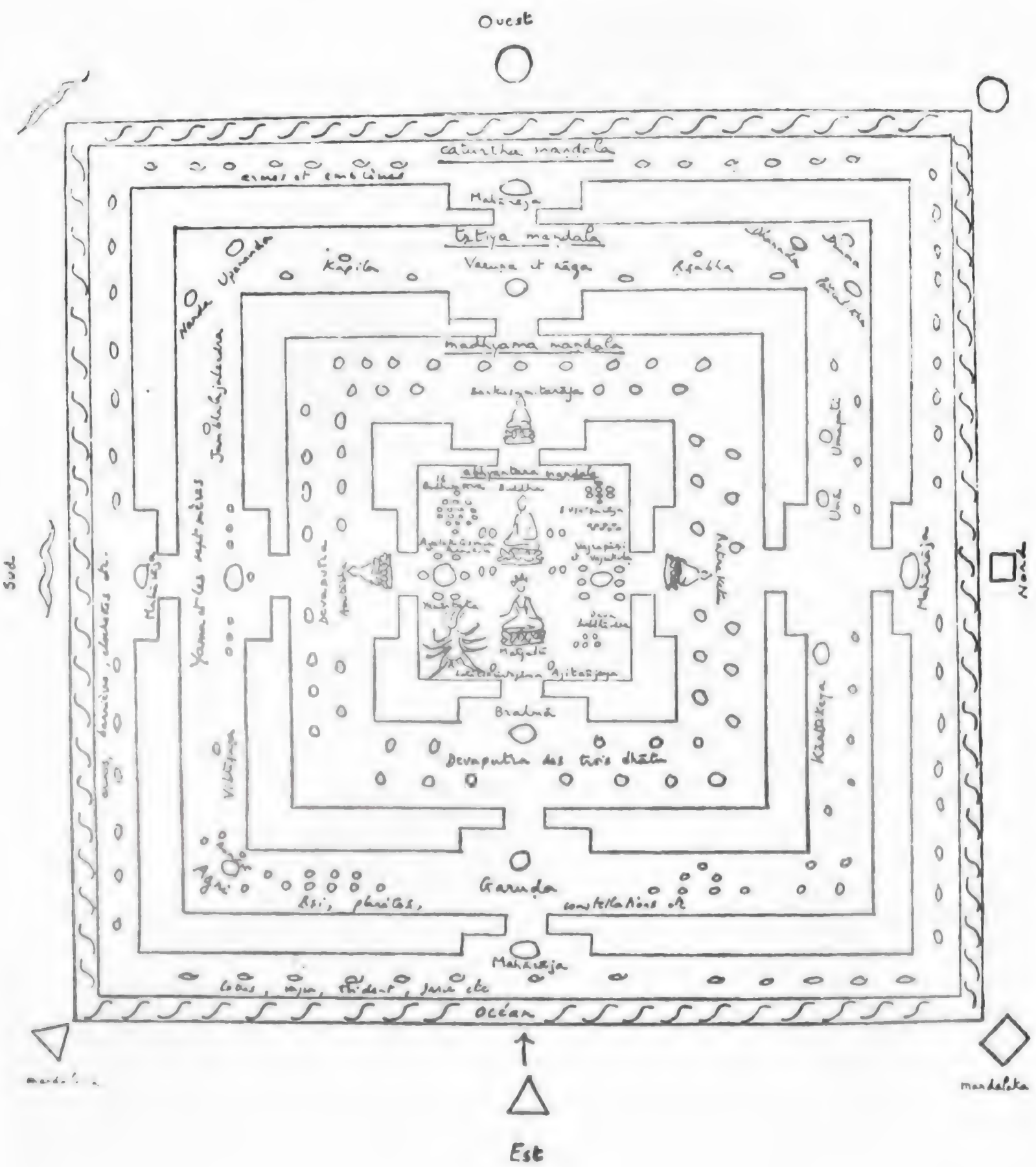


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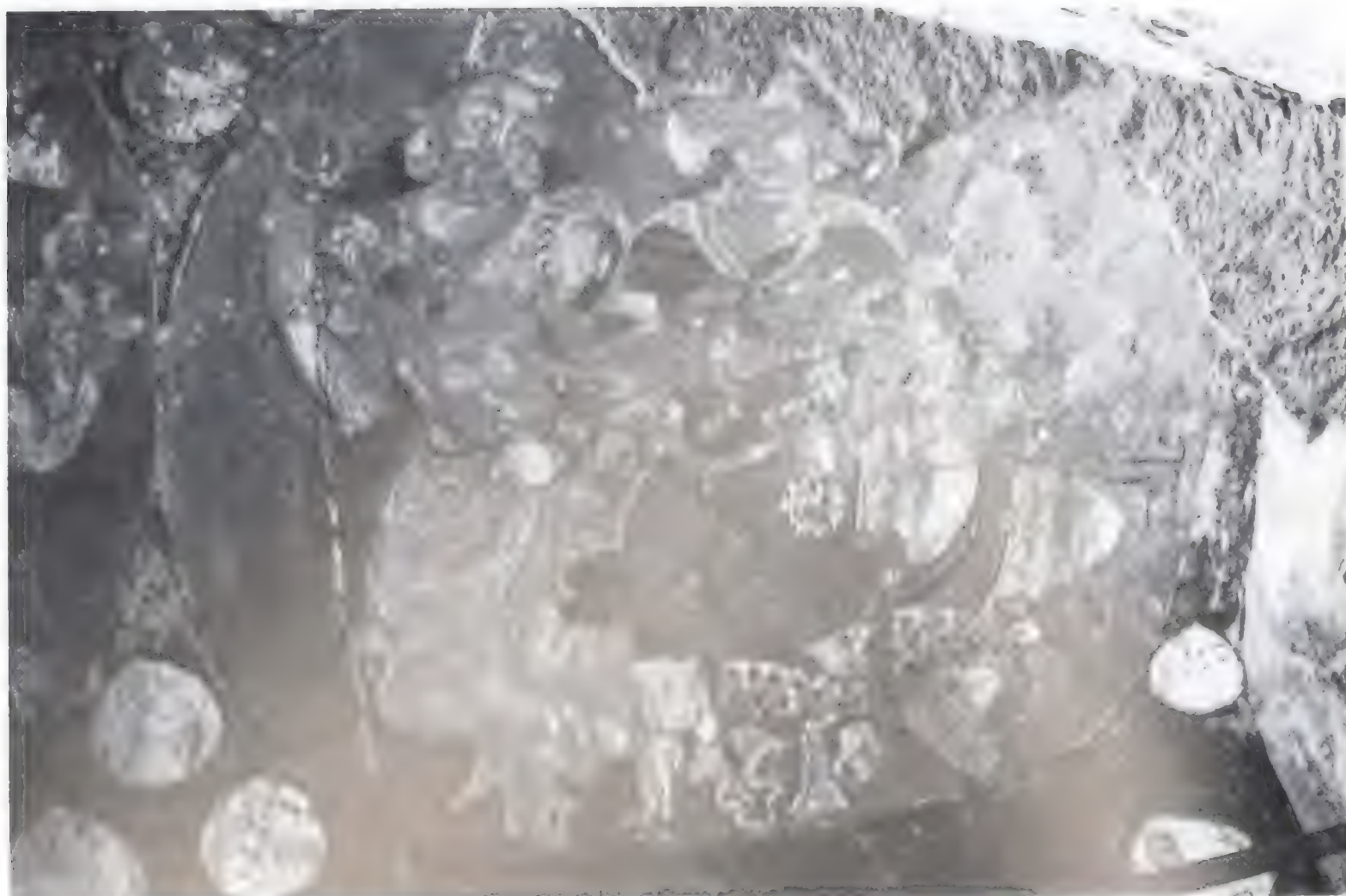


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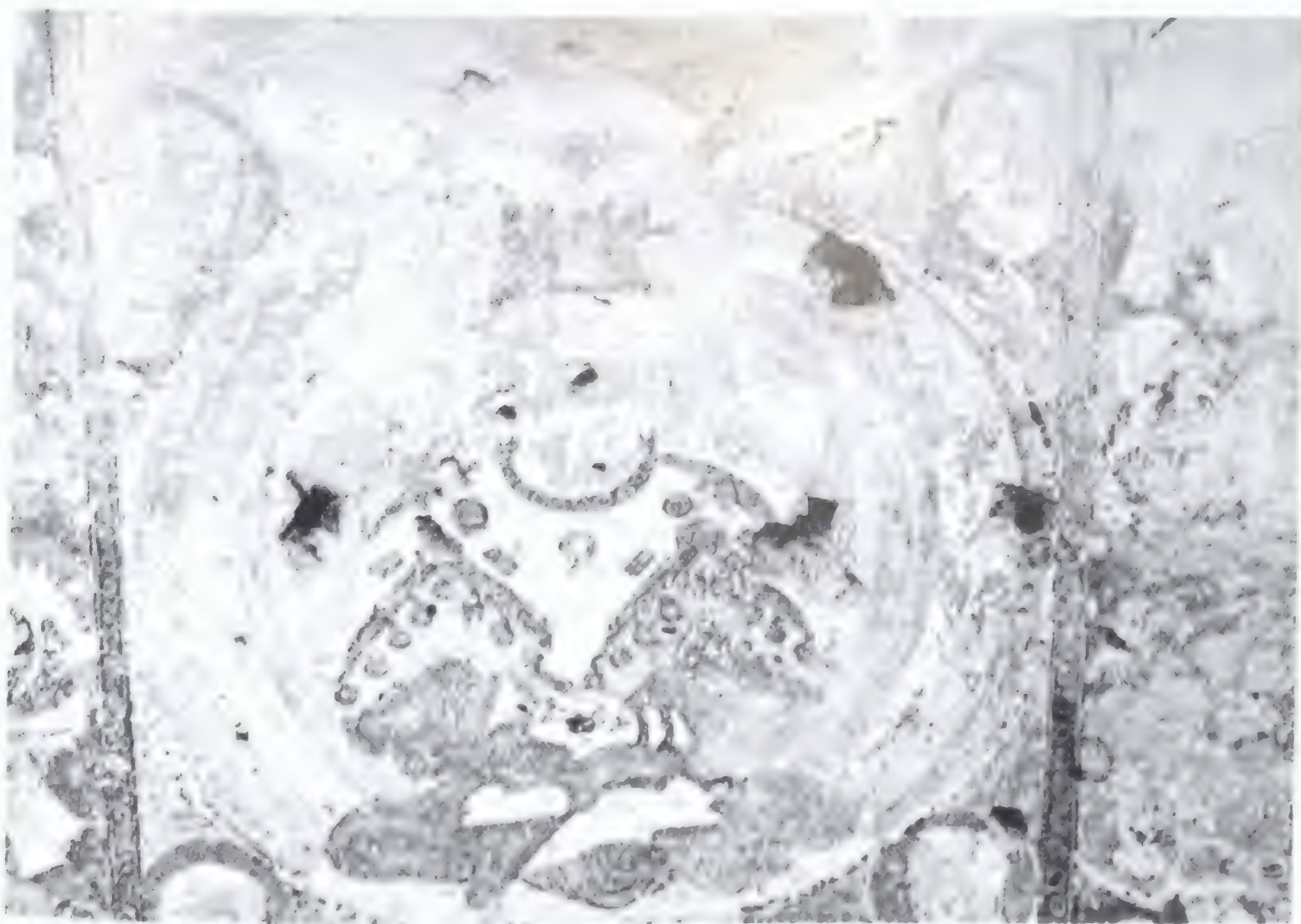


Fig. 33 - Bāmiyān. Cave S. Crowned Buddha.

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Fig. 36 - Bāmiyān. 55-meter Buddha niche. East side wall, crowned Buddha.



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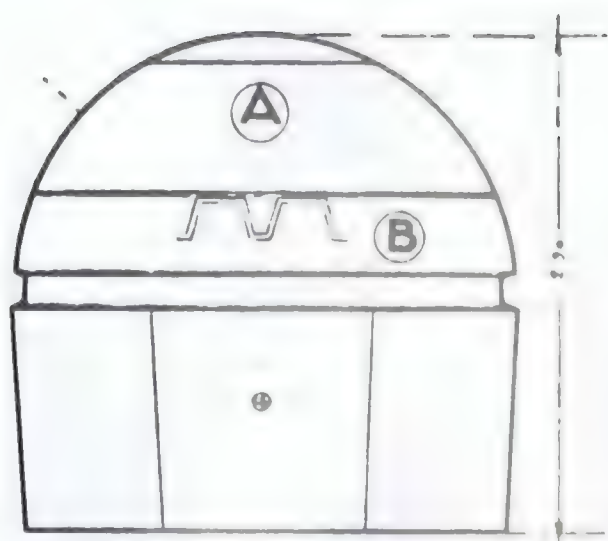
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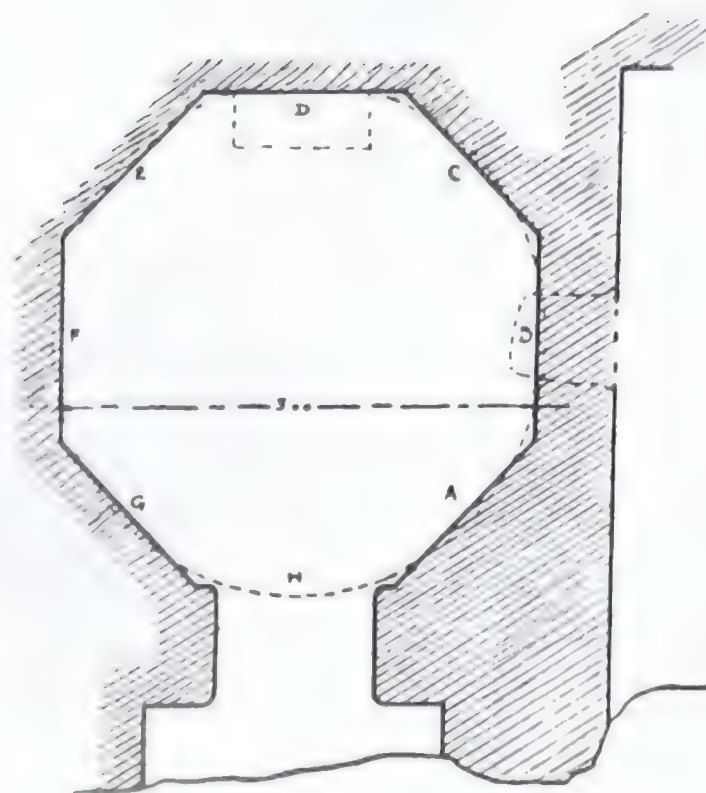
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COUPE



PLAN



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Fig. 49 - Bāmiyān. 55-meter Buddha niche. Reconstruction of painting.

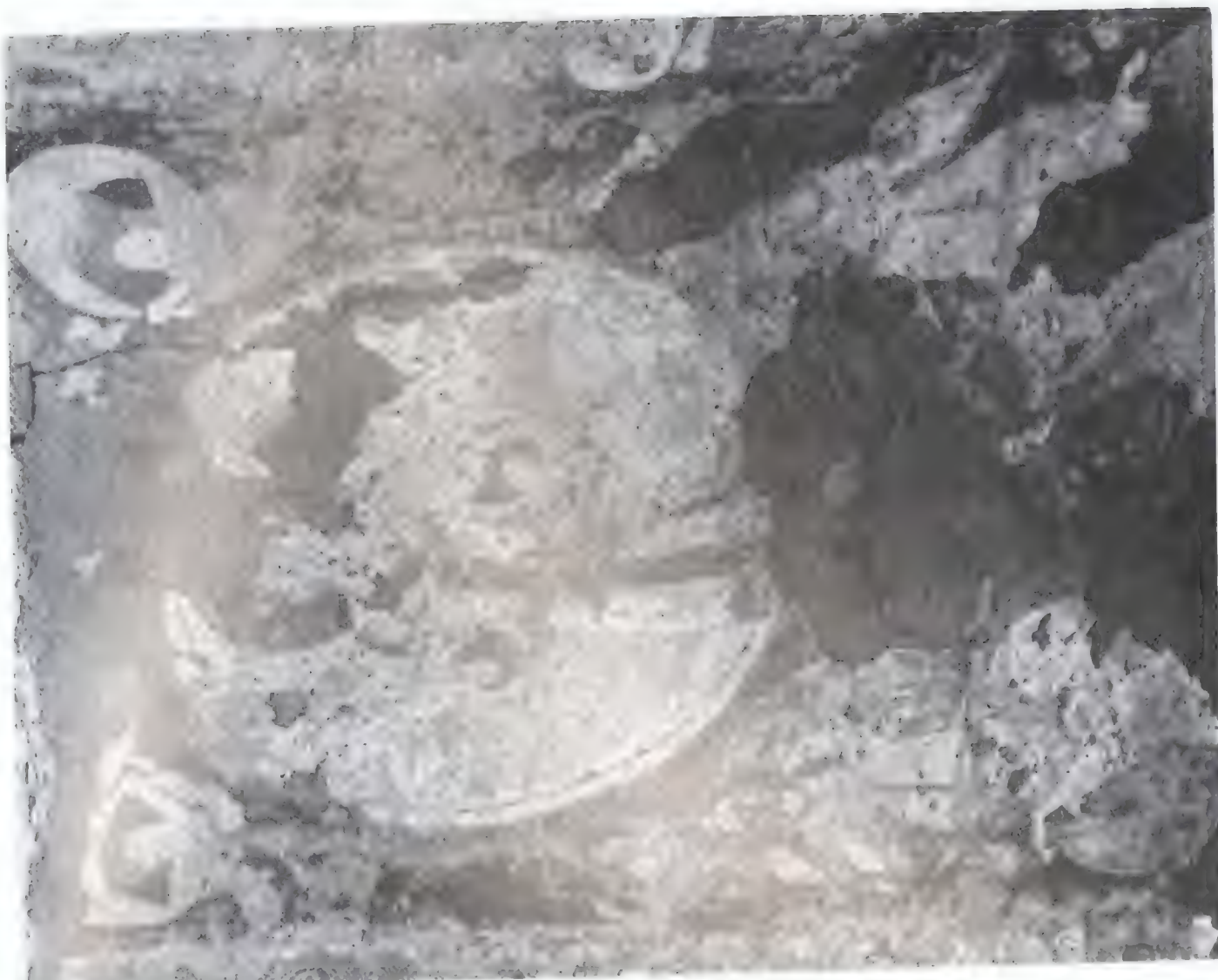


Fig. 51 - Bāmiyān. 38-meter Buddha niche. Painting in soffit.

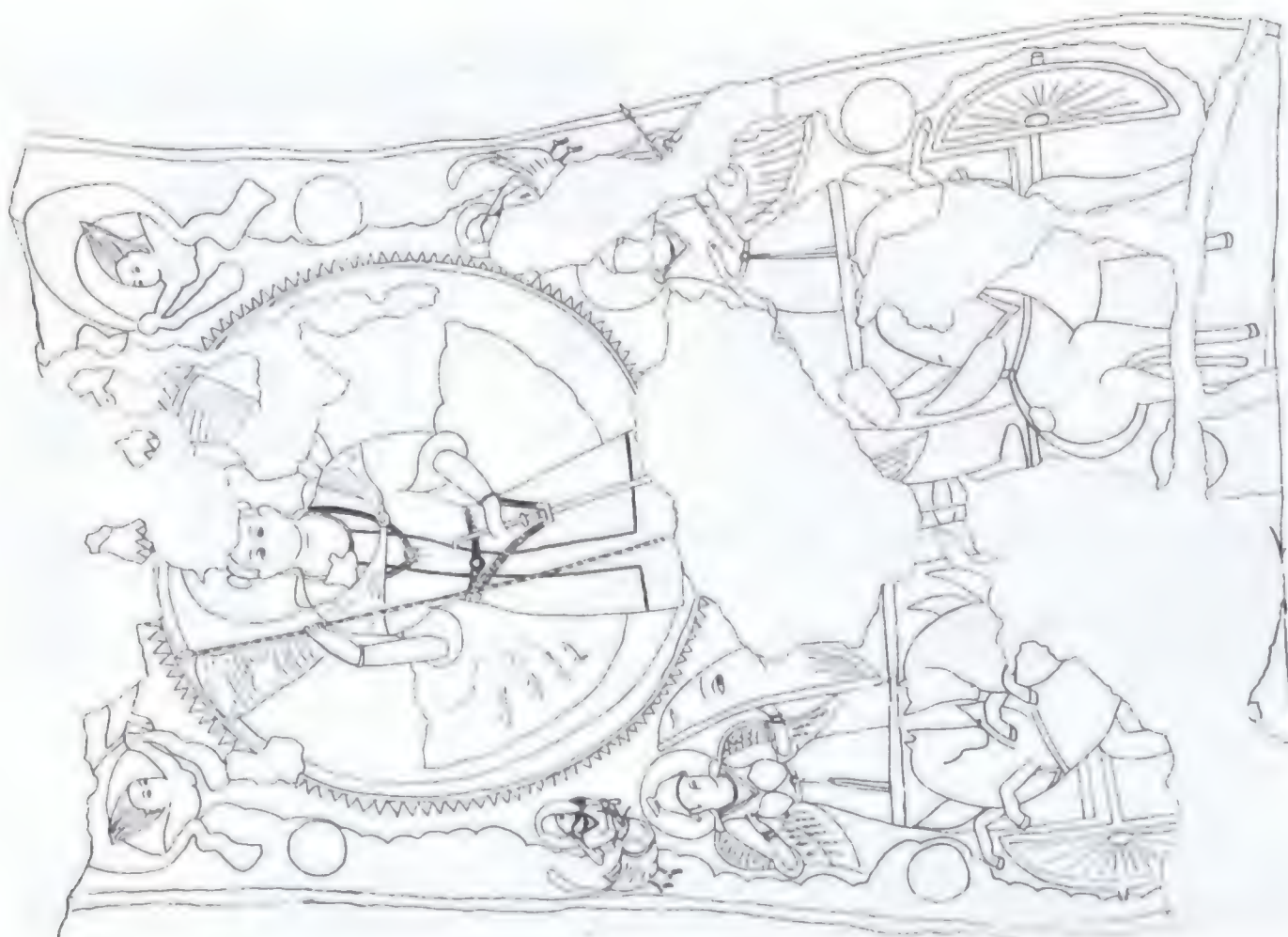


Fig. 50 - Bāmiyān. 38-meter Buddha niche.



Fig. 52 - Fondukistān. Niche D. Buddha.



Fig. 53 - Pakistan. Stūpa. Detail of Vaiśrāvāṇa on harmikā.



Fig. 54 - Bāmiyān. Cave C2. Drum zone, detail of donor in lower left corner.

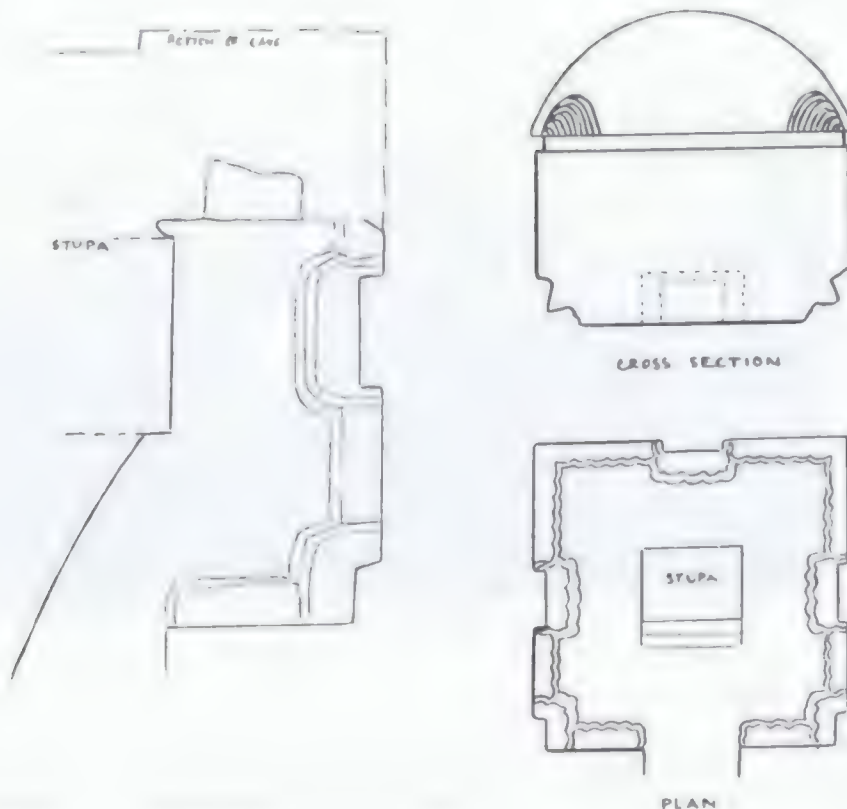


Fig. 55 - Bāmiyān. Cave G3. Plan and cross sections.



Fig. 56 - Bāmiyān. Cave G. Wooden head.



Fig. 57 - Bāmiyān. Cave G. Copy of painting on dome.

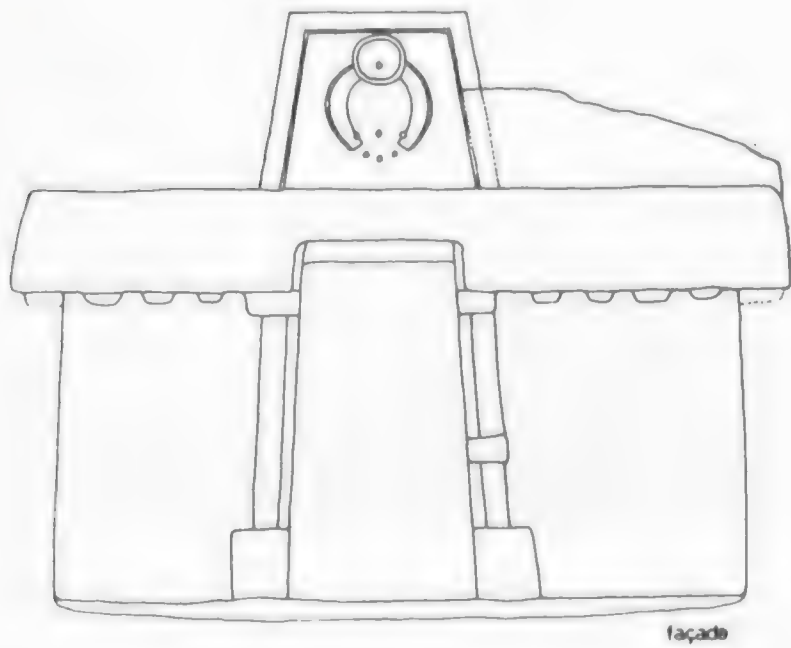
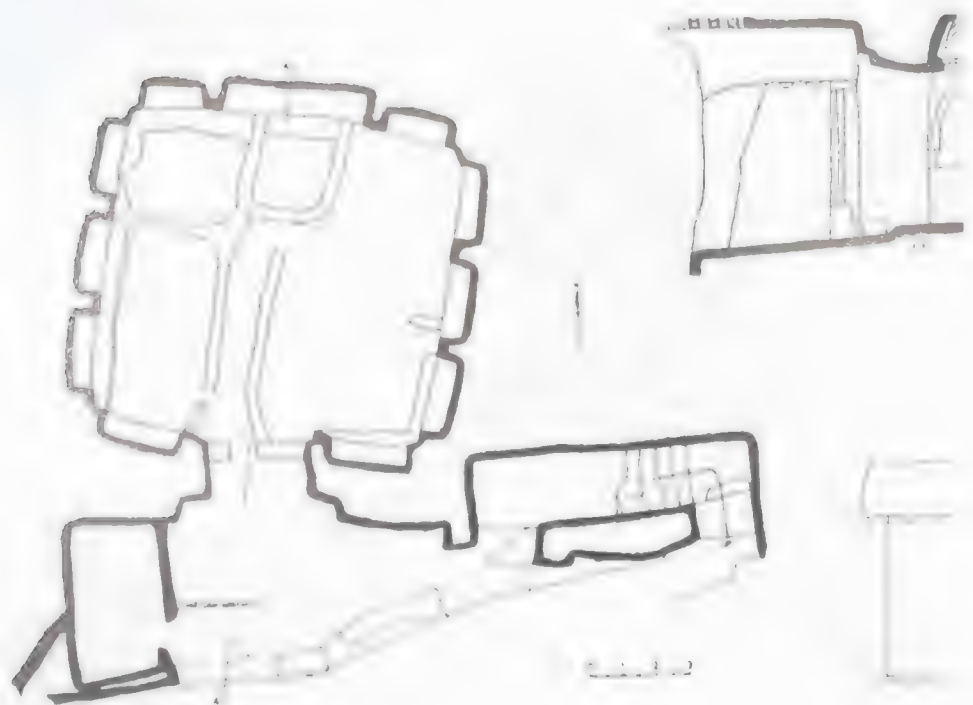
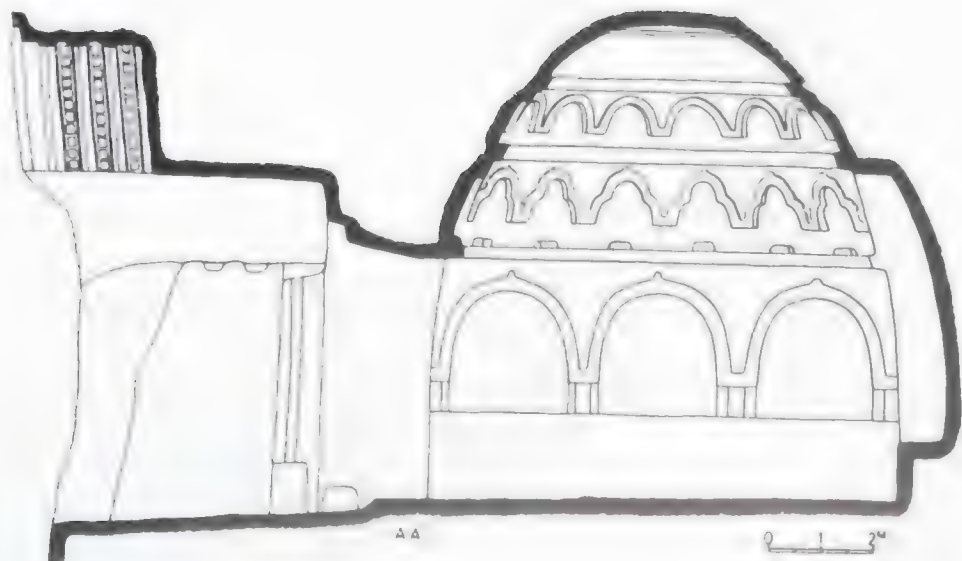
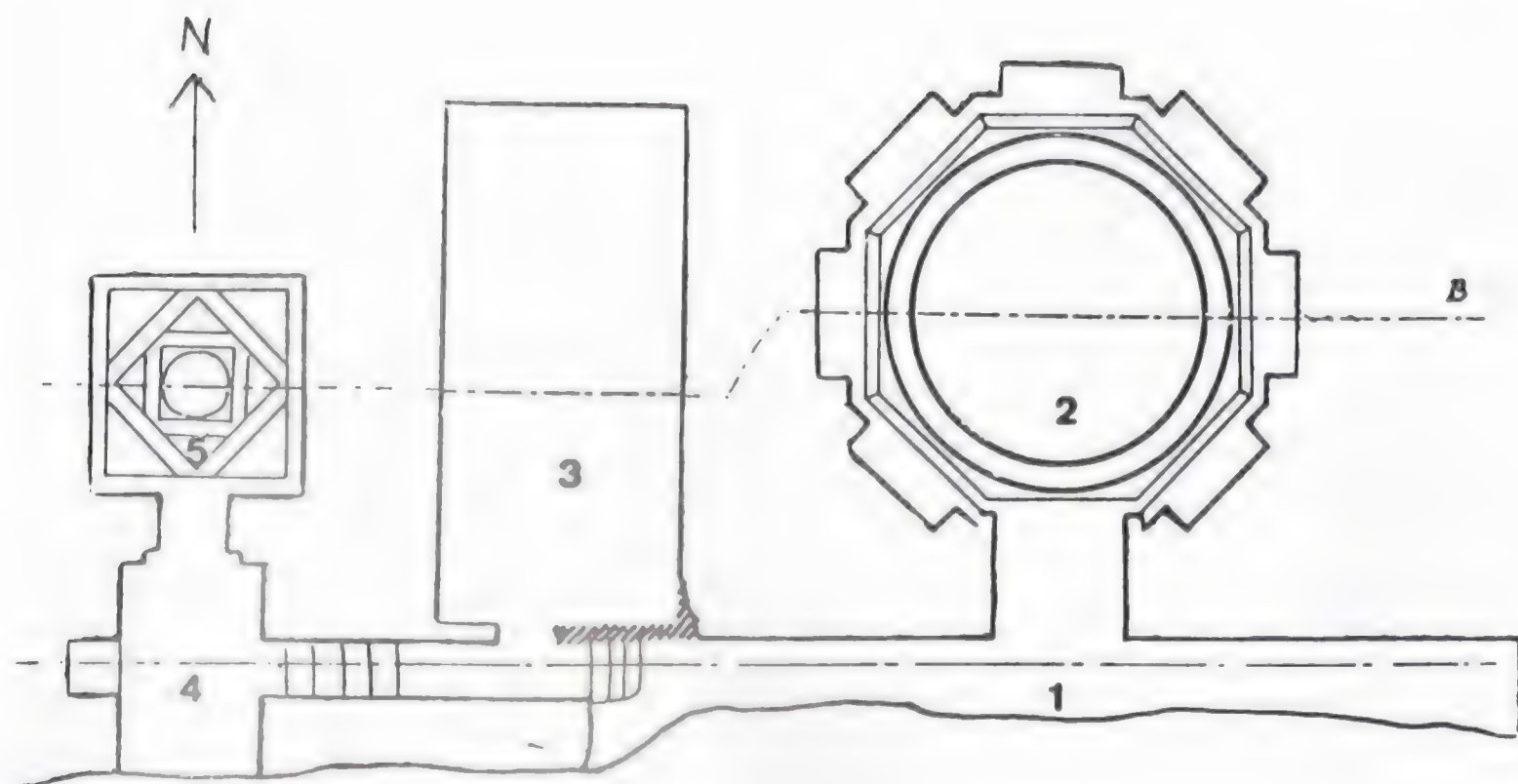
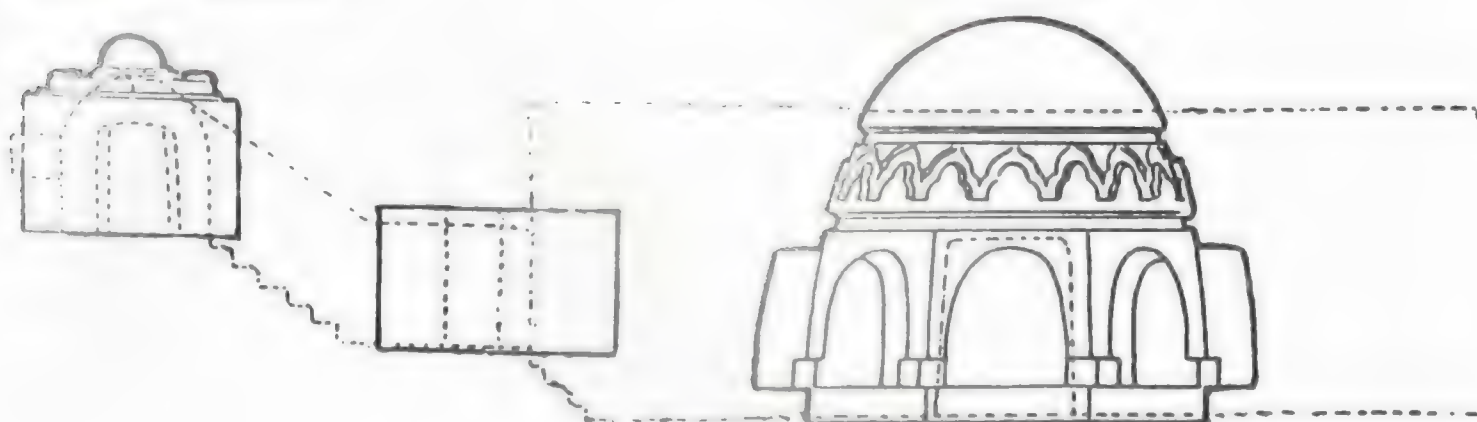


Fig. 58 - Bāmiyān. Cave Complex T, including G1.



0 5M



cross section AB

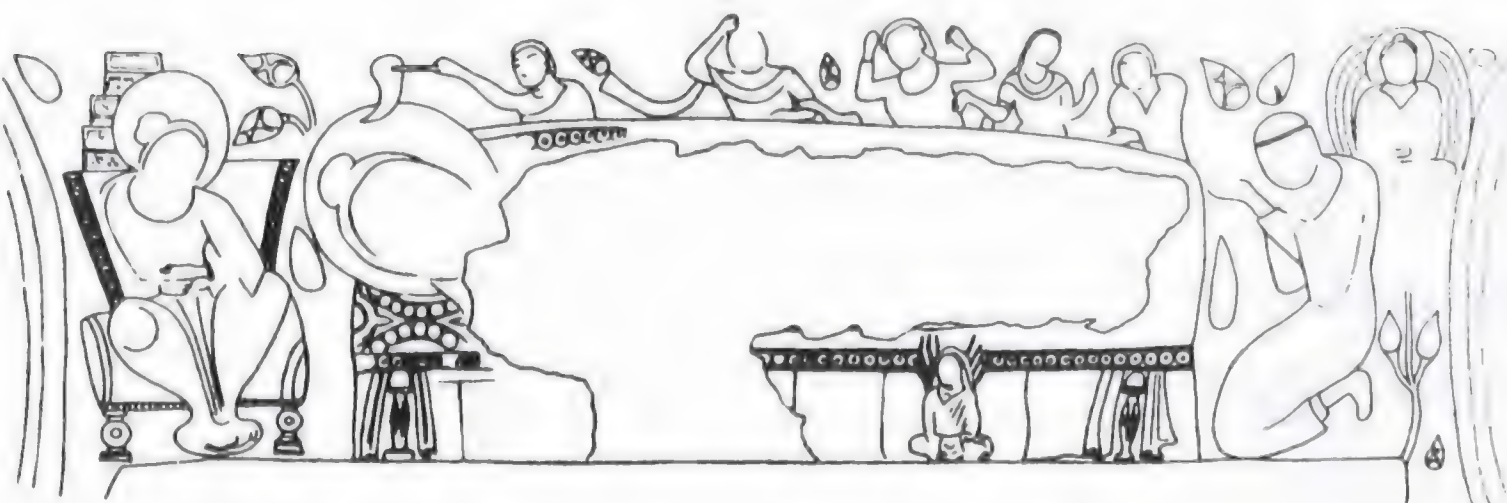


Fig. 59 - Bāmiyān. Cave F. Plan and cross section.

Fig. 60 - Bāmiyān. Cave F. Mahāparinirvāṇa.

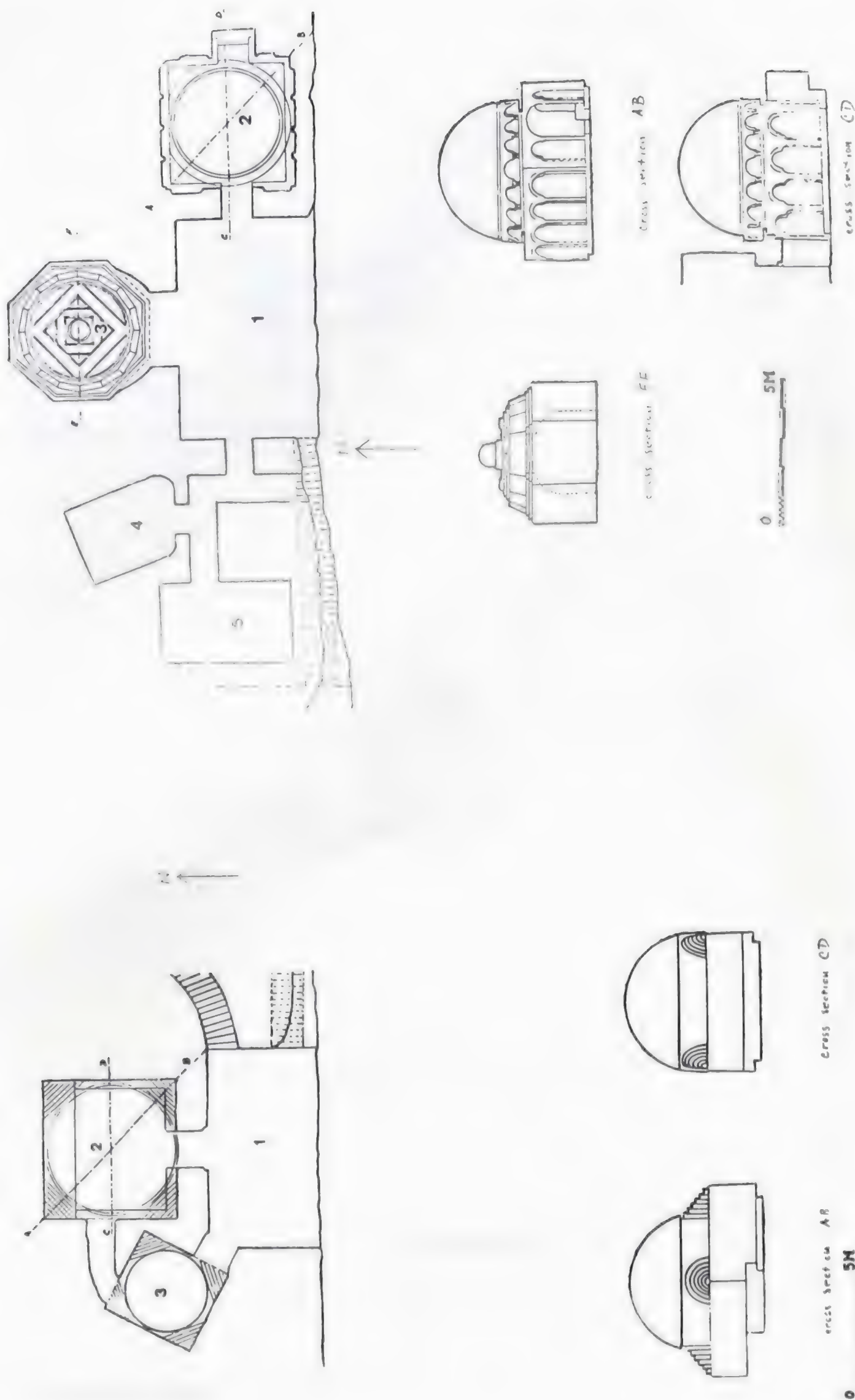


Fig. 61 - Bāmiyān. Cave A. Plan and cross section of lower level.

Fig. 62 - Bāmiyān. Cave A. Plan and cross section of upper level.

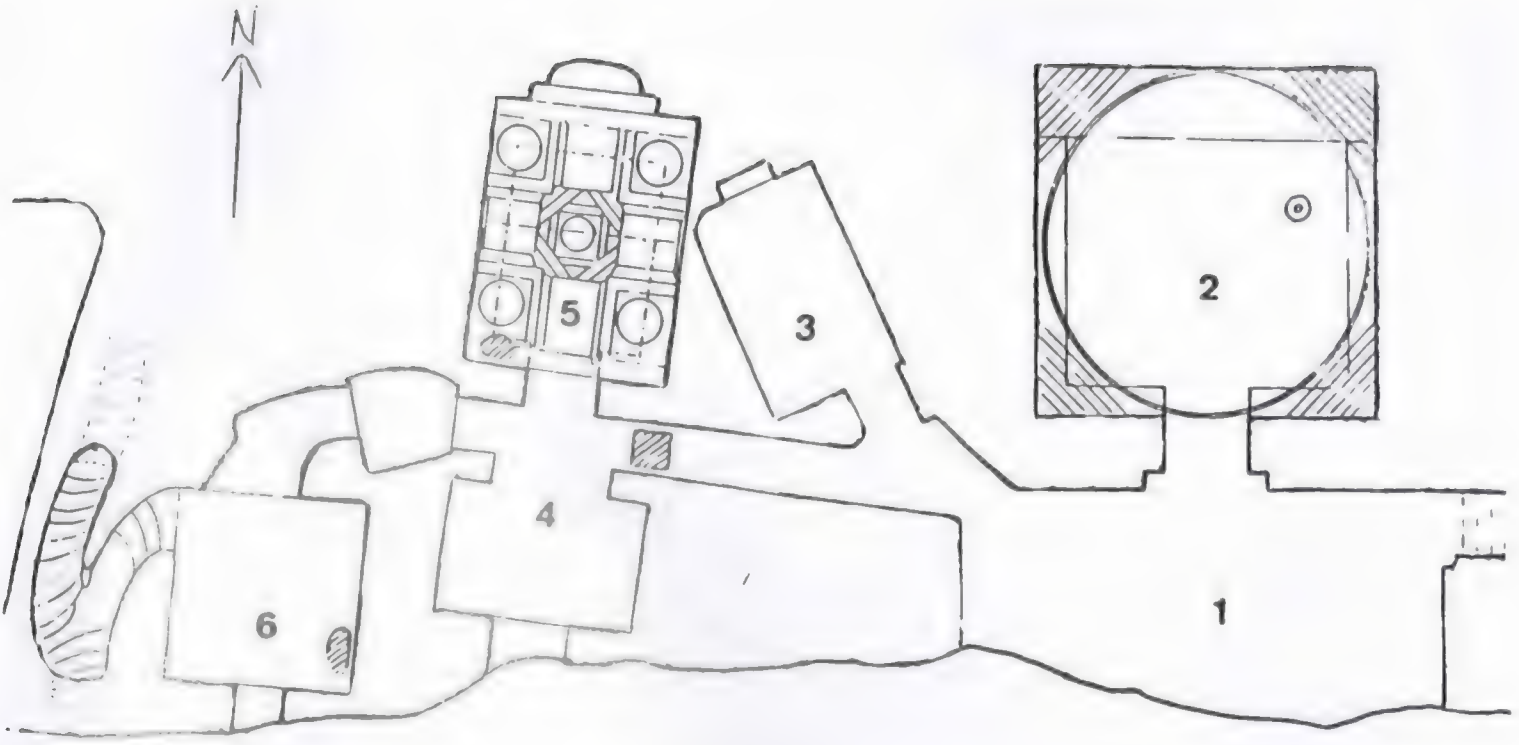


Fig. 63 - Bāmiyān. Cave N. Plan and cross section.

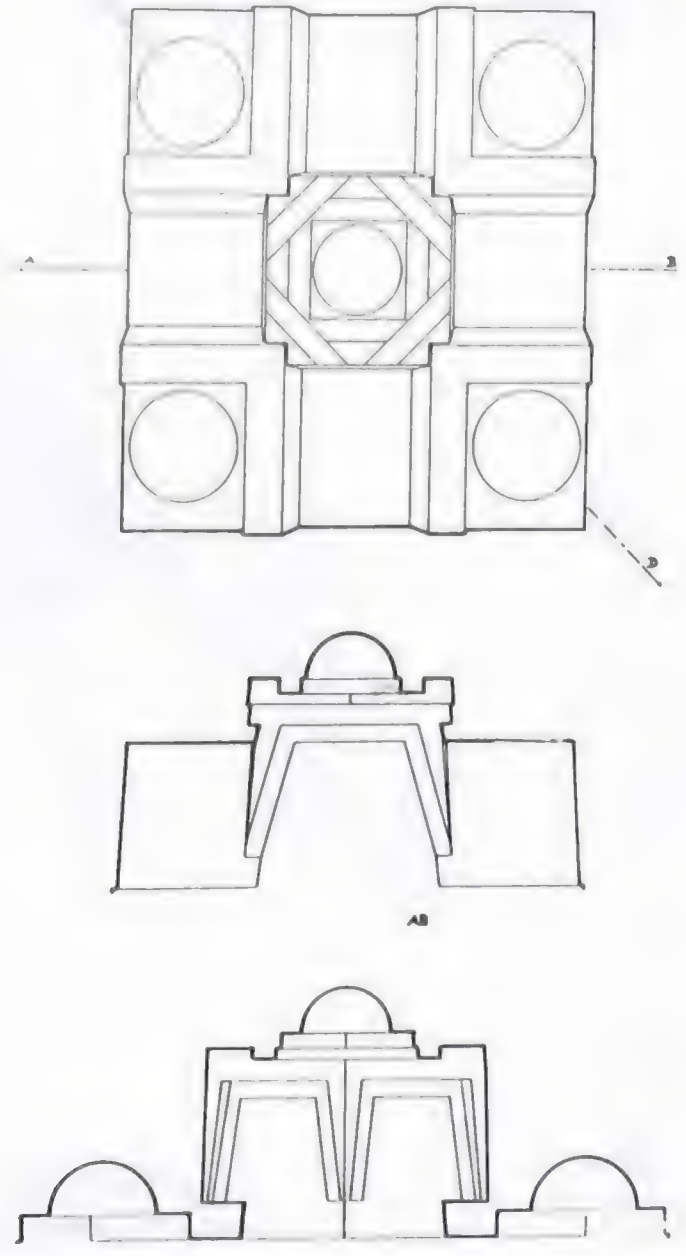


Fig. 64 - Bāmiyān. Cave B5. Plan and cross sections.

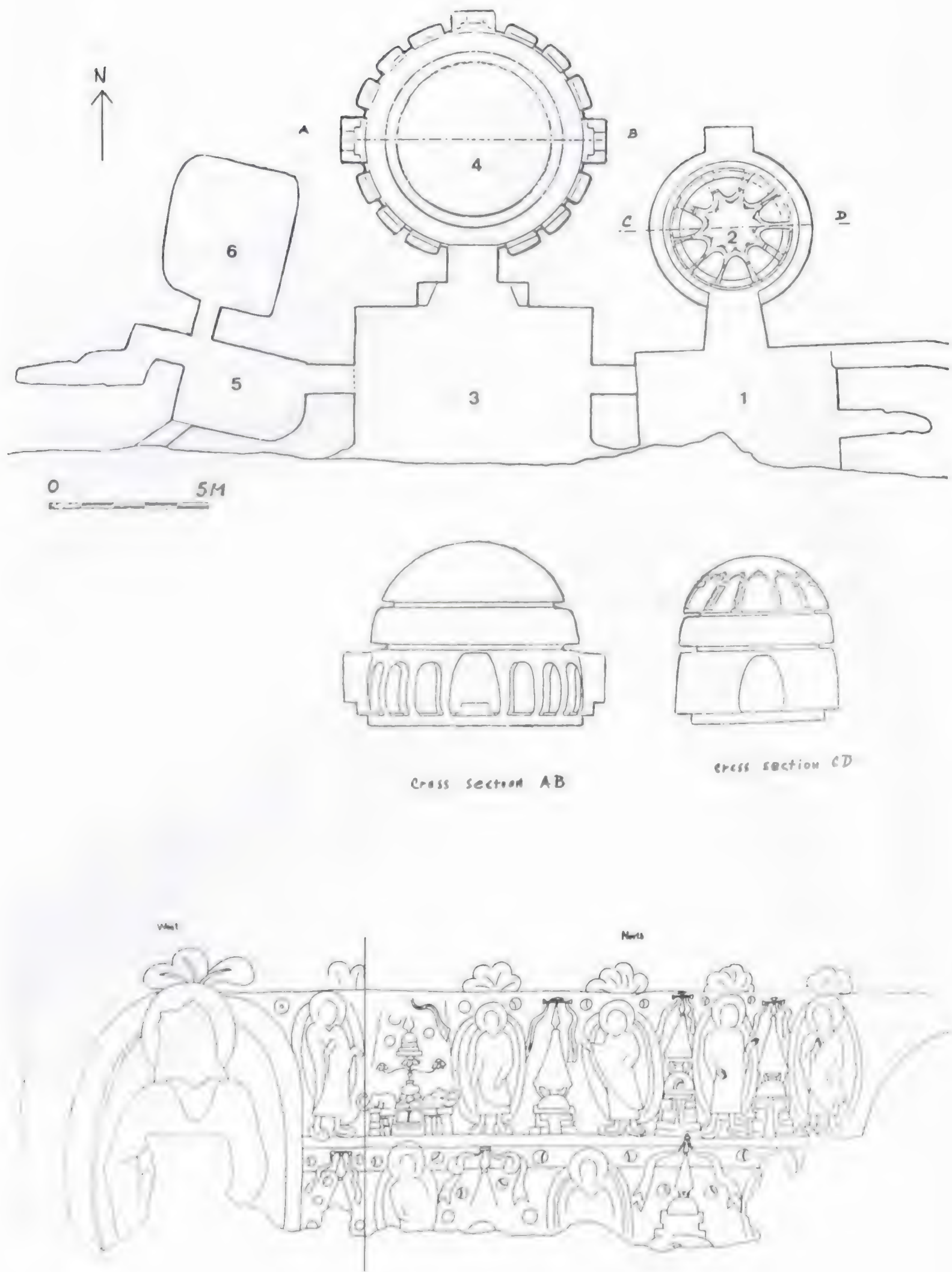


Fig. 65 - Bāmiyān. Cave C. Plan and cross sections.

Fig. 66 - Bāmiyān. Cave C. Reconstruction of painting in vestibule.

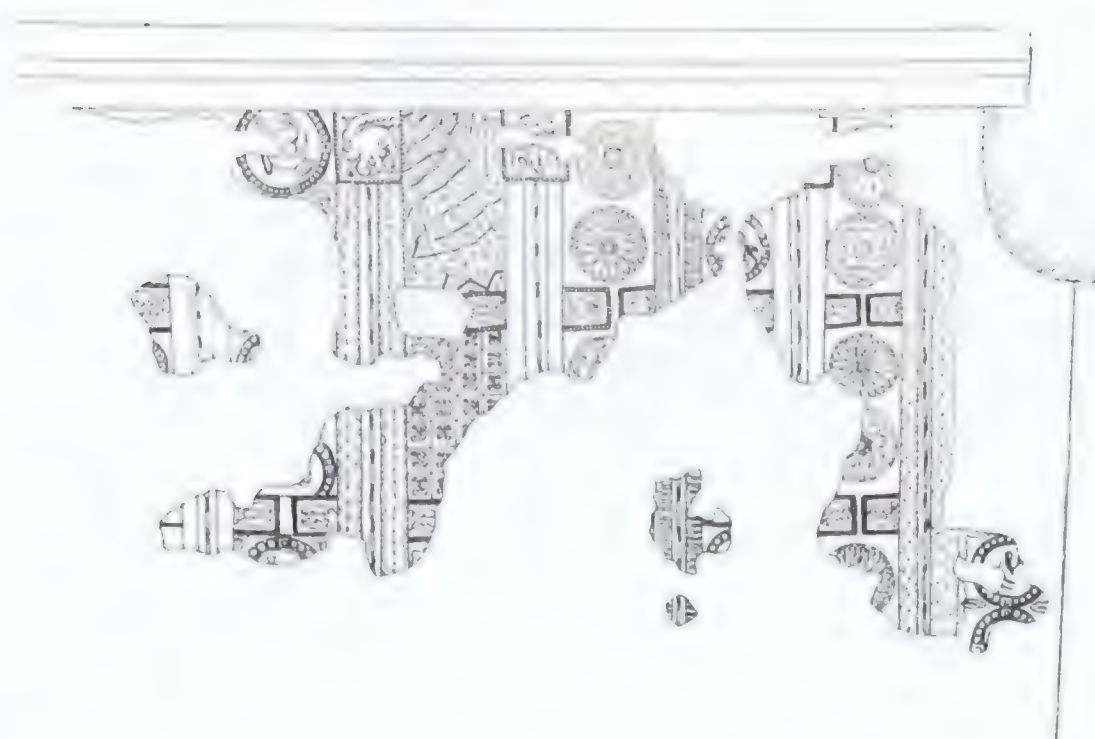


Fig. 67 - Bāmiyān. Cave D. Detail, painted ceiling of vestibule.

Fig. 68 - Bāmiyān. Cave D. Reconstruction of ceiling.

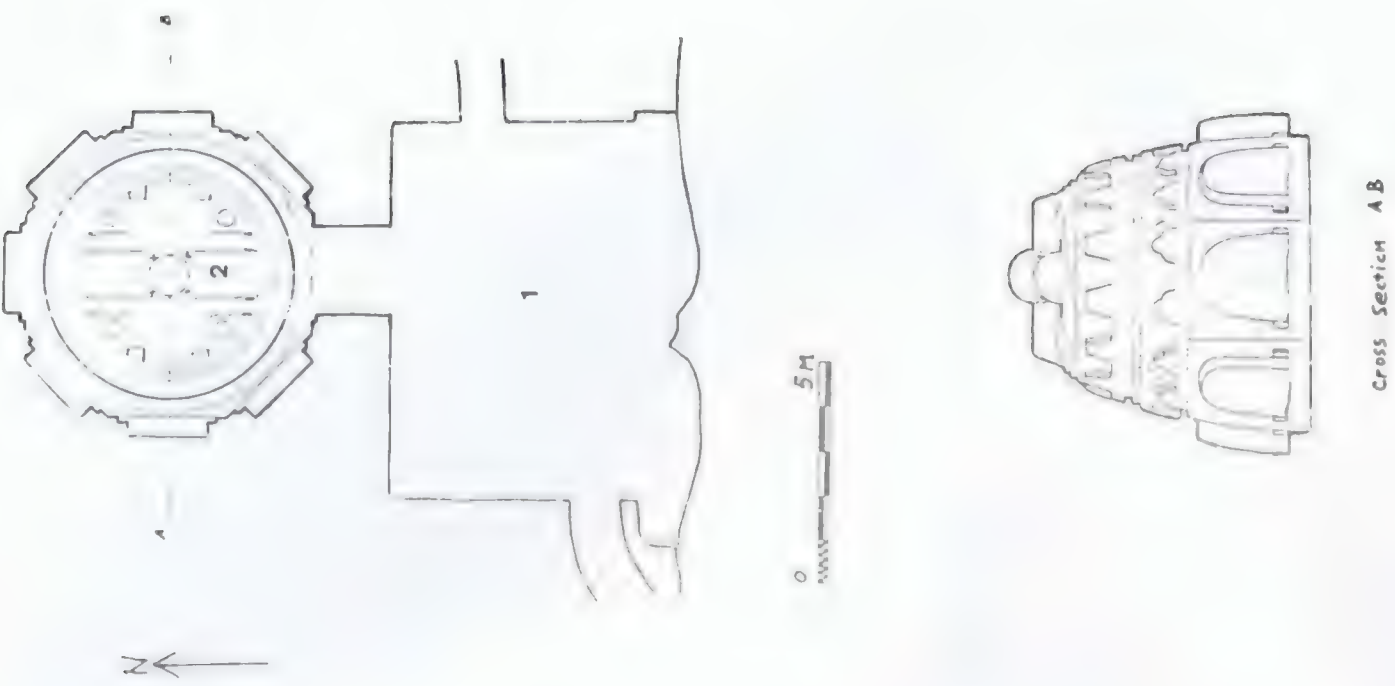


Fig. 70 - Bāmiyān. Cave D. Plan and cross section.

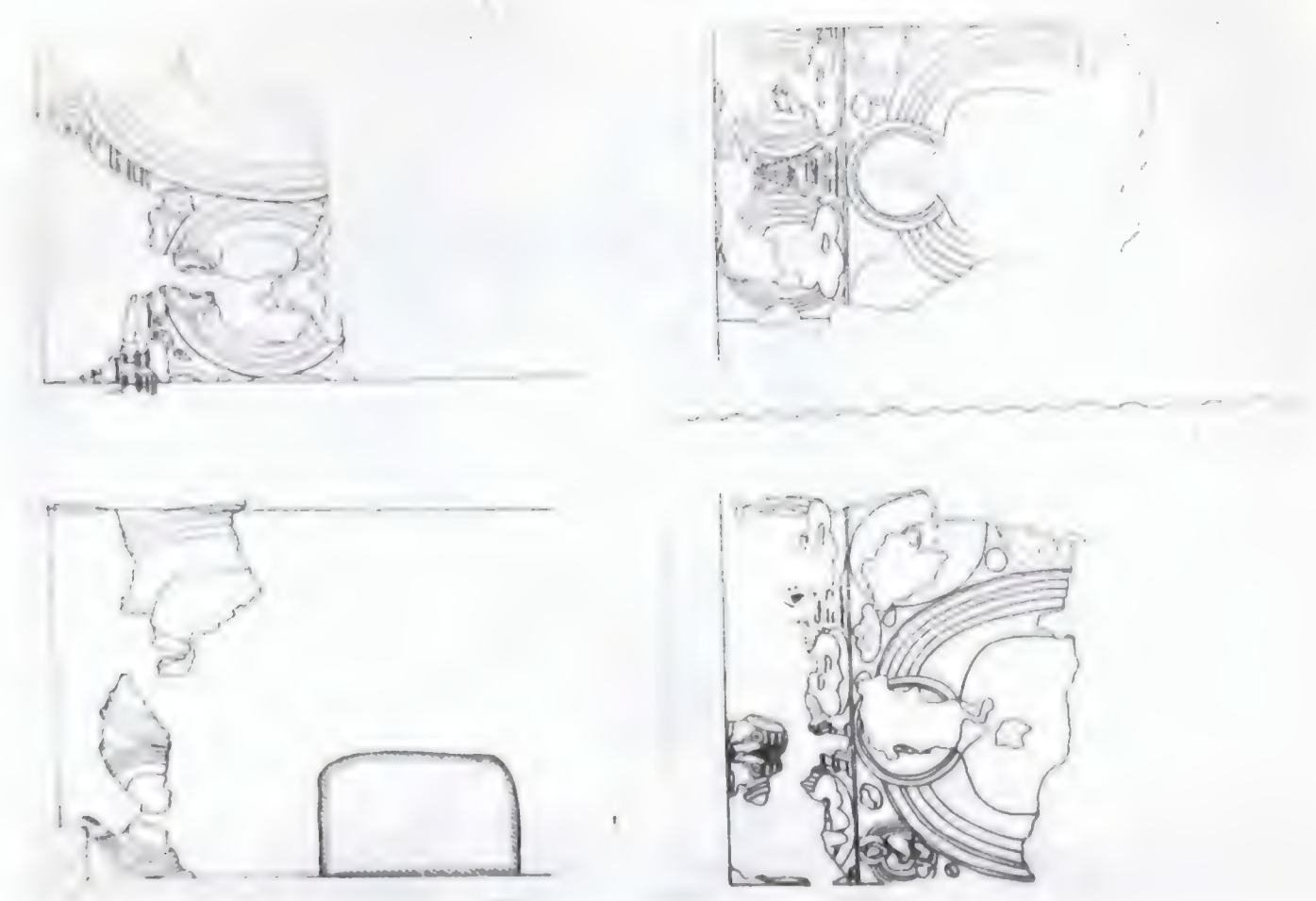


Fig. 69 - Bāmiyān. Cave D. Reconstruction of paintings on wall of vestibule.

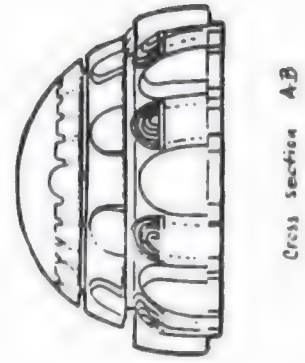
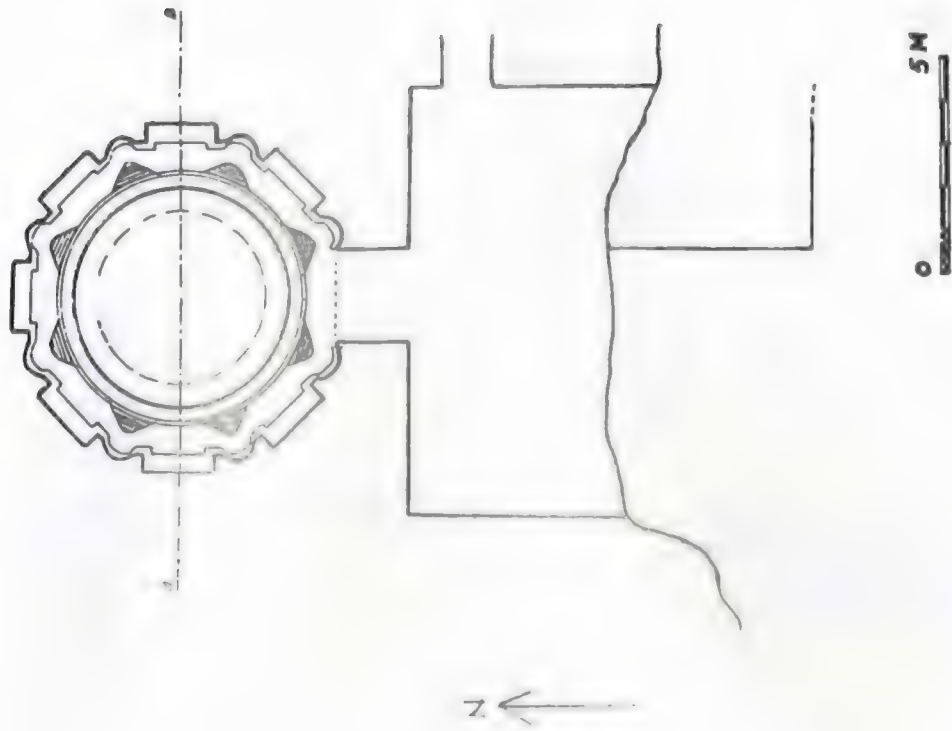


Fig. 72 - Bāmiyān. Cave D1. Plan and cross section.

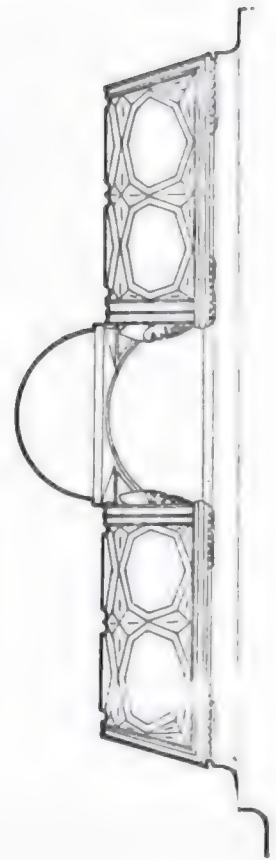
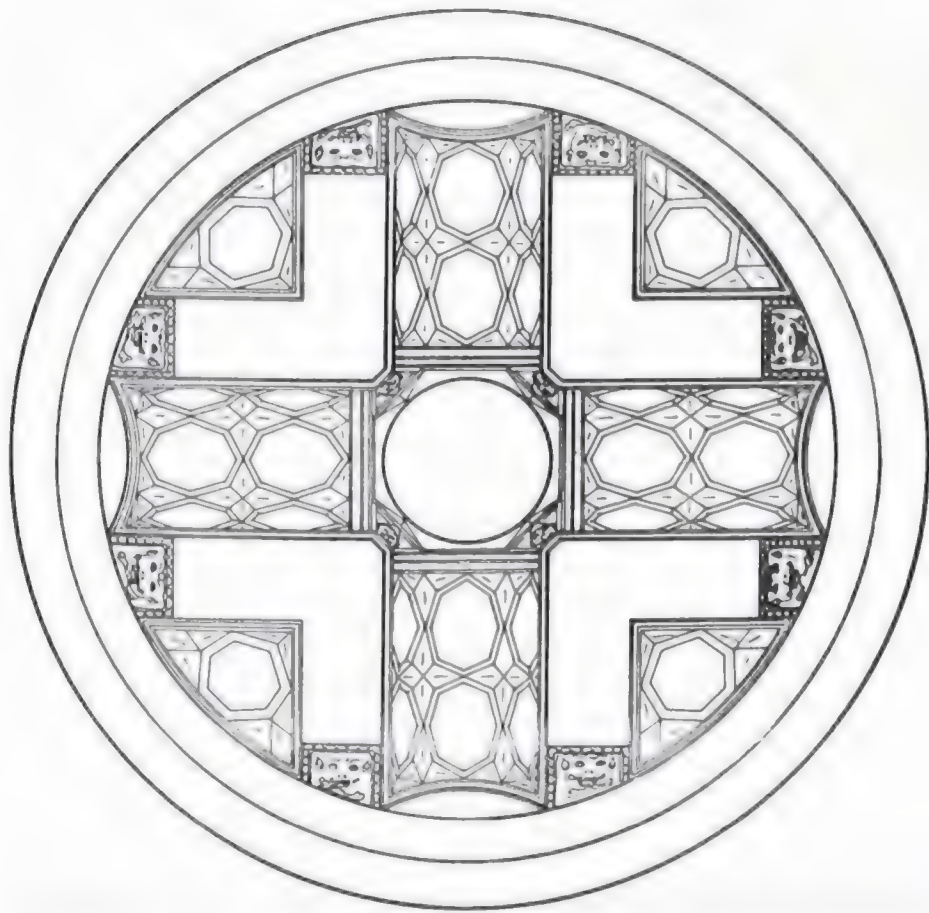


Fig. 71 - Bāmiyān. Cave D2. Ceiling and cross section.

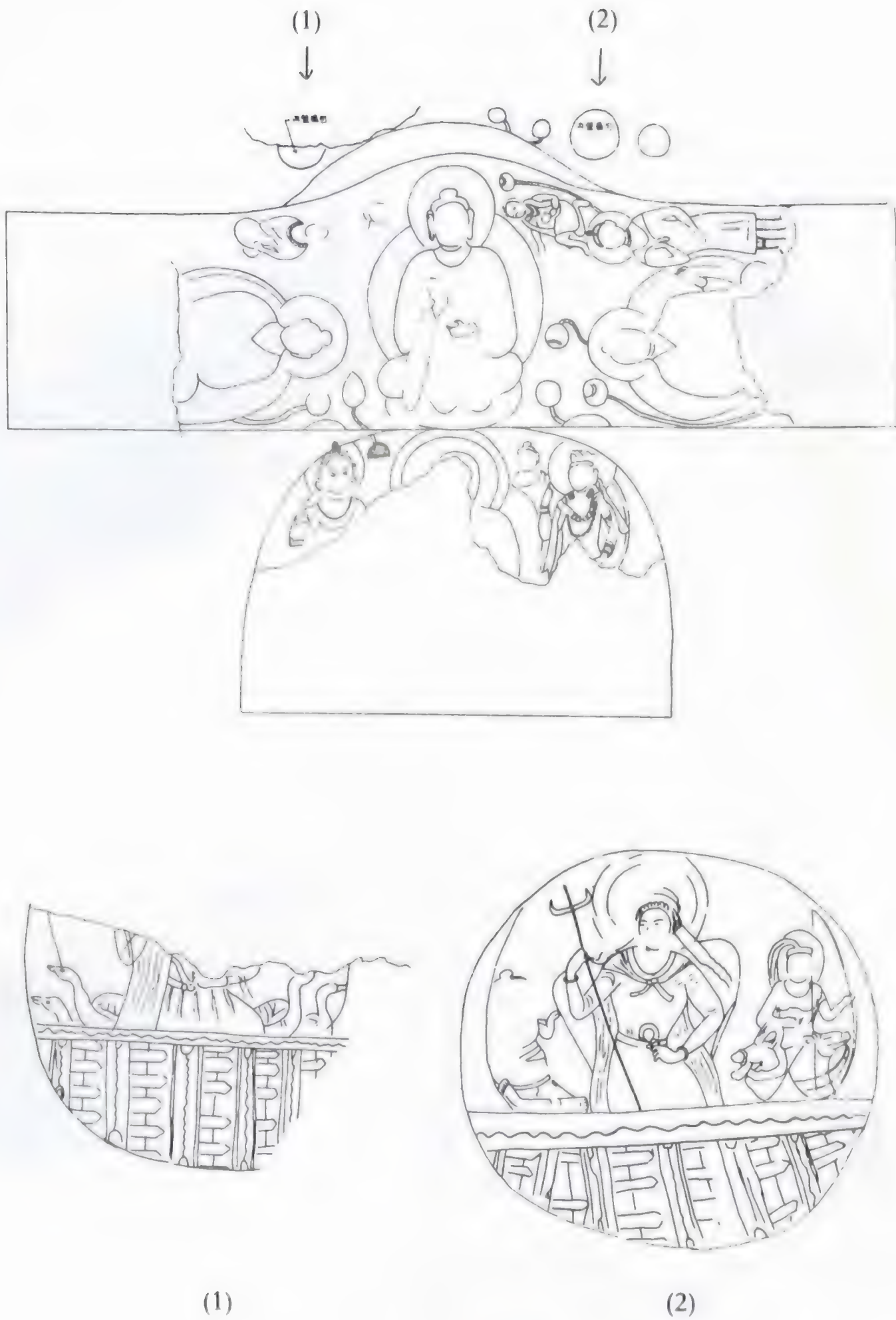
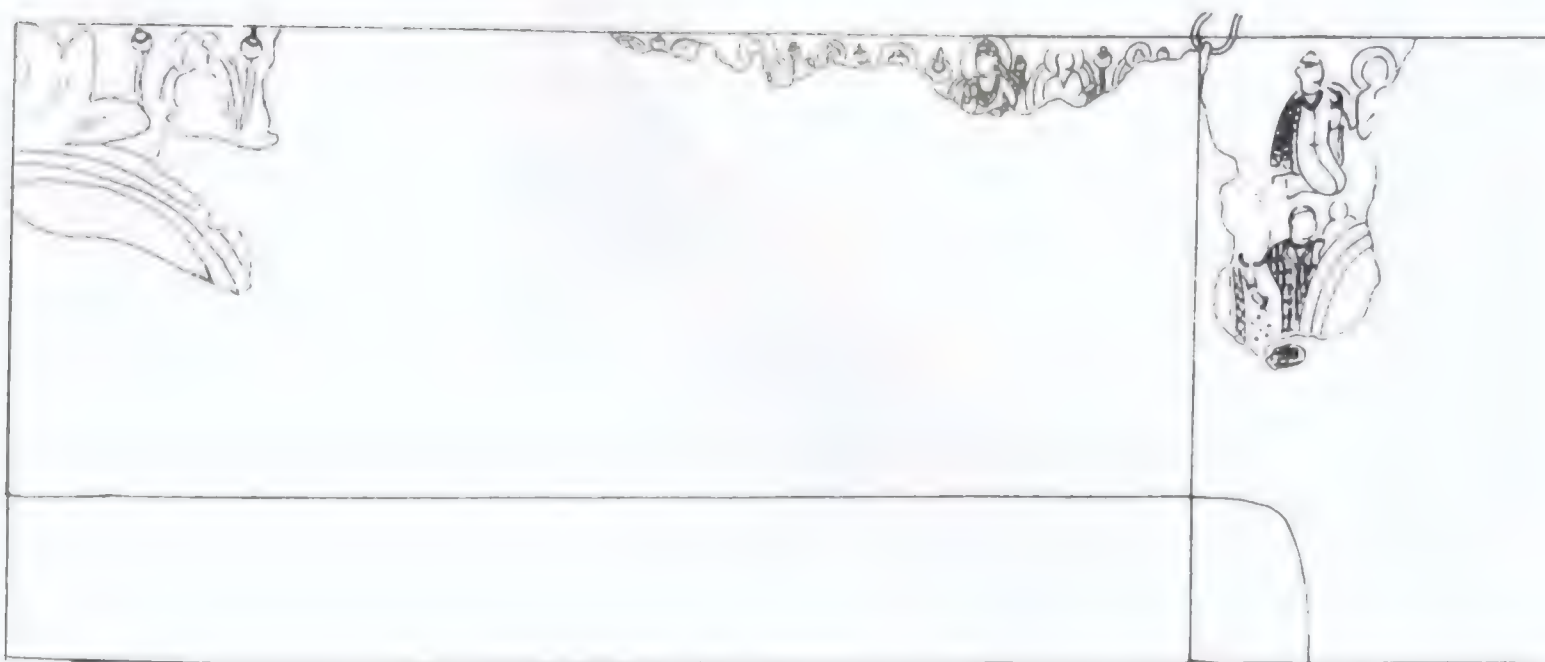


Fig. 73 - Bāmiyān. Cave M. Niche on north wall. Reconstruction of painting. Detail: (1) sun; (2) moon.



North wall



East wall

South wall

Fig. 74 - Bāmiyān. Cave M. Reconstruction of paintings on north, east and south walls.

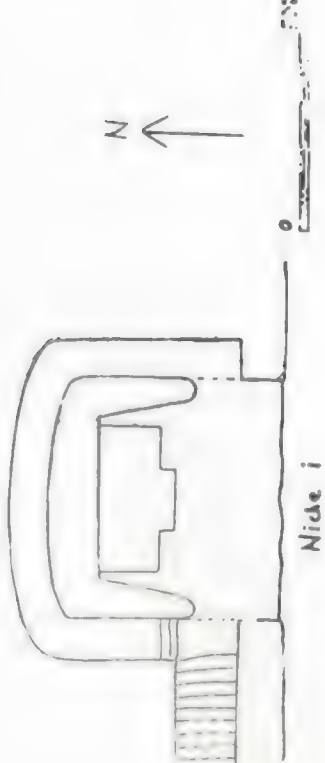
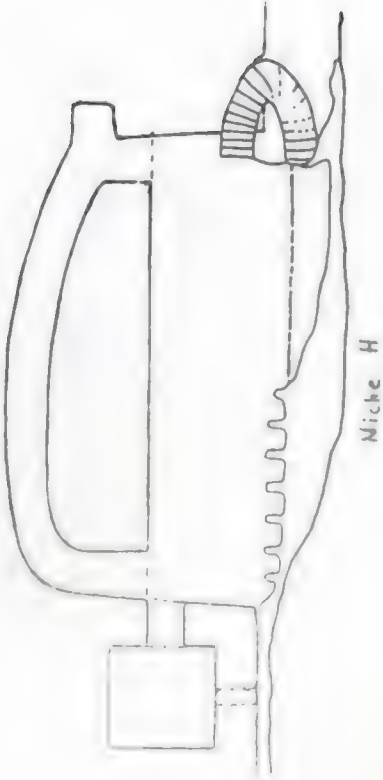
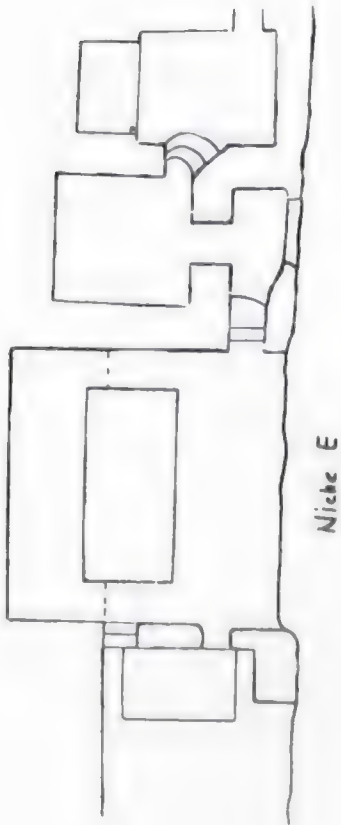


Fig. 75 - Bāmiyān. Cave complex C.
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Fig. 76 - Bāmiyān. Niches E, H, I. Plans.



Fig. 77 - Bāmiyān. Niche E. Reconstruction of painting in soffit.



Fig. 78 - Bāmiyān. Niche E. Painting in soffit.



Fig. 79 - Bāmiyān. Niche E. Side wall. Detail of seated Buddha in Mode 2.



Fig. 80 - Bāmiyān. Niche E. Side wall. Detail of seated Buddha in Mode 1.

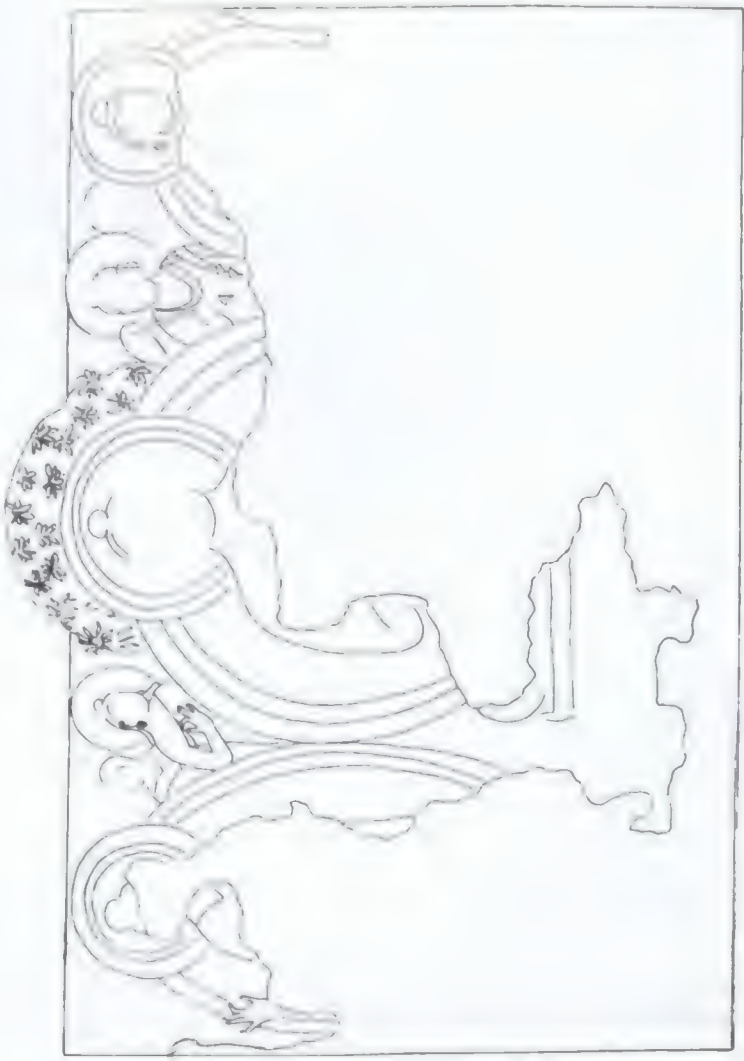
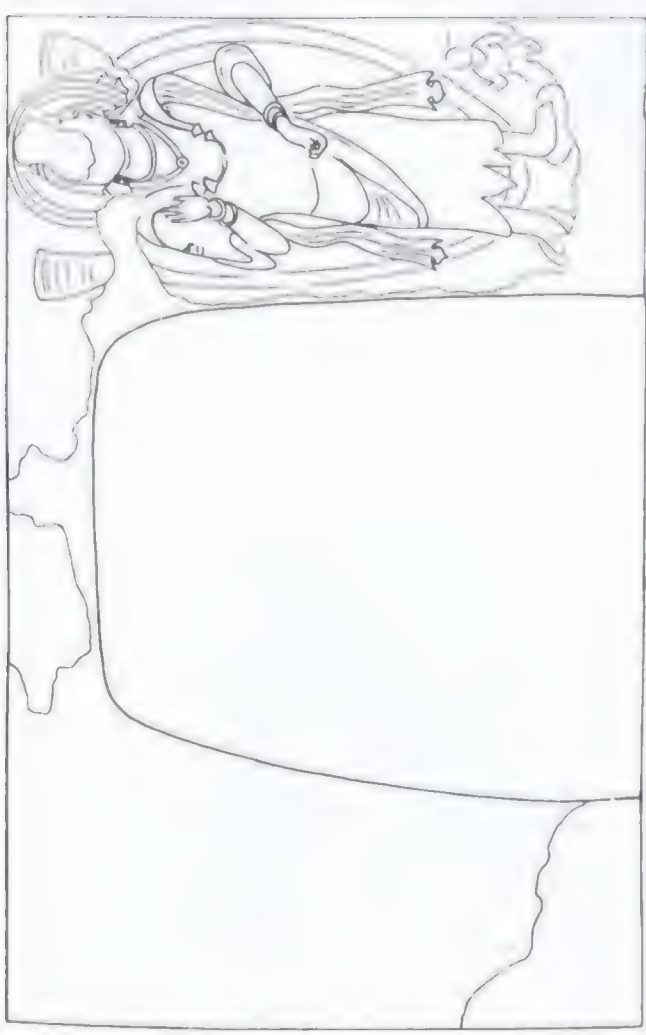
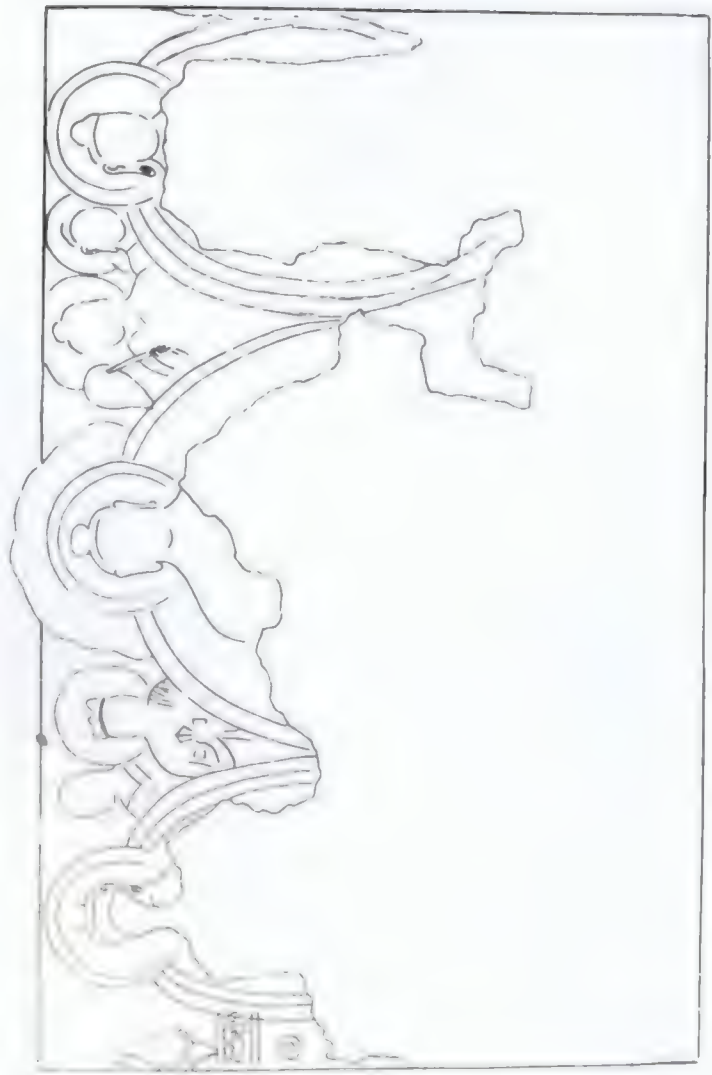


Fig. 81 - Bāmiyān. Cave J. Reconstruction of paintings on walls. By Akira Miyaji.

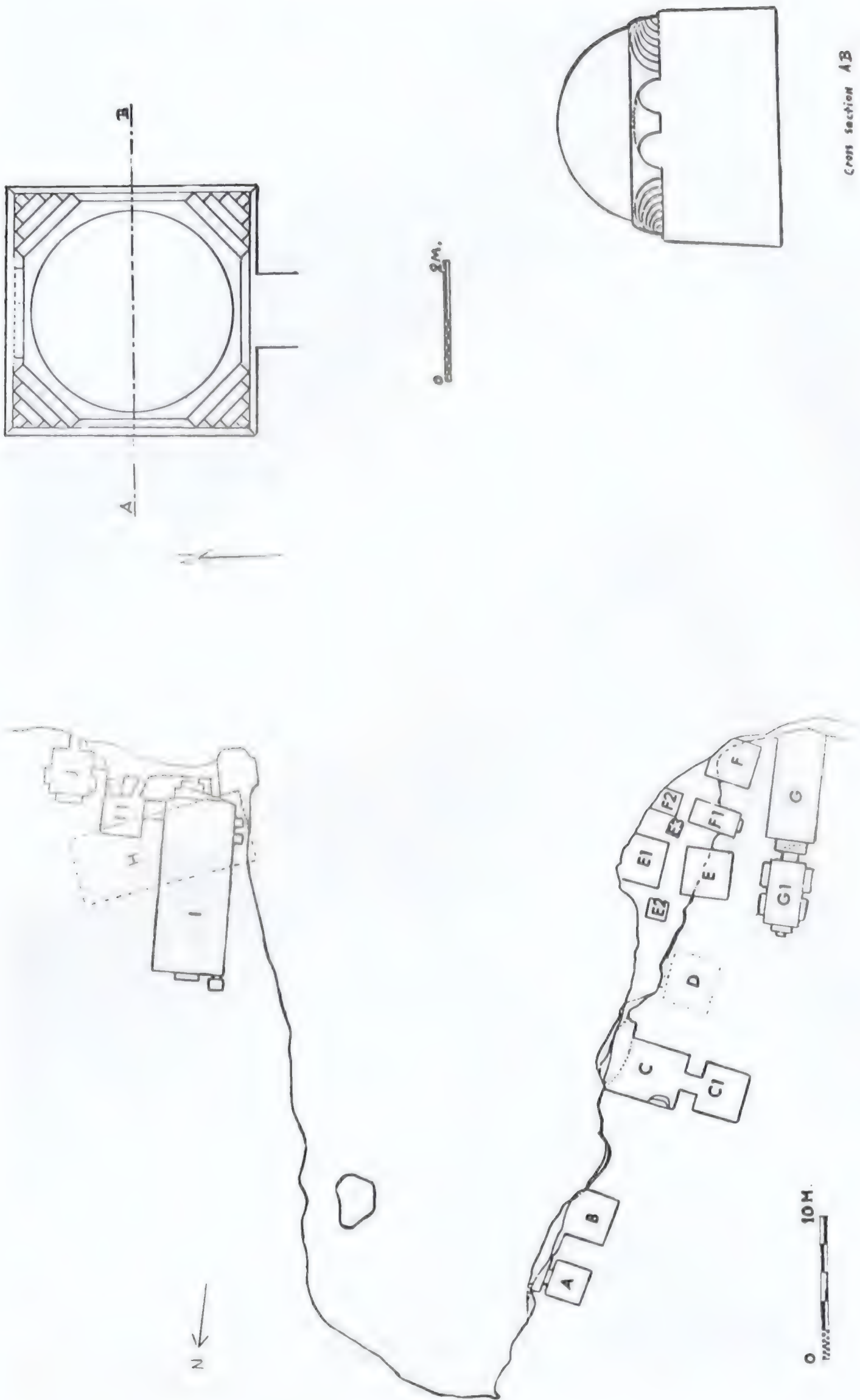


Fig. 82 - Folādi. Plan of cave complexes.

Fig. 83 - Bāmiyān. Cave J4. Plan and cross sections.

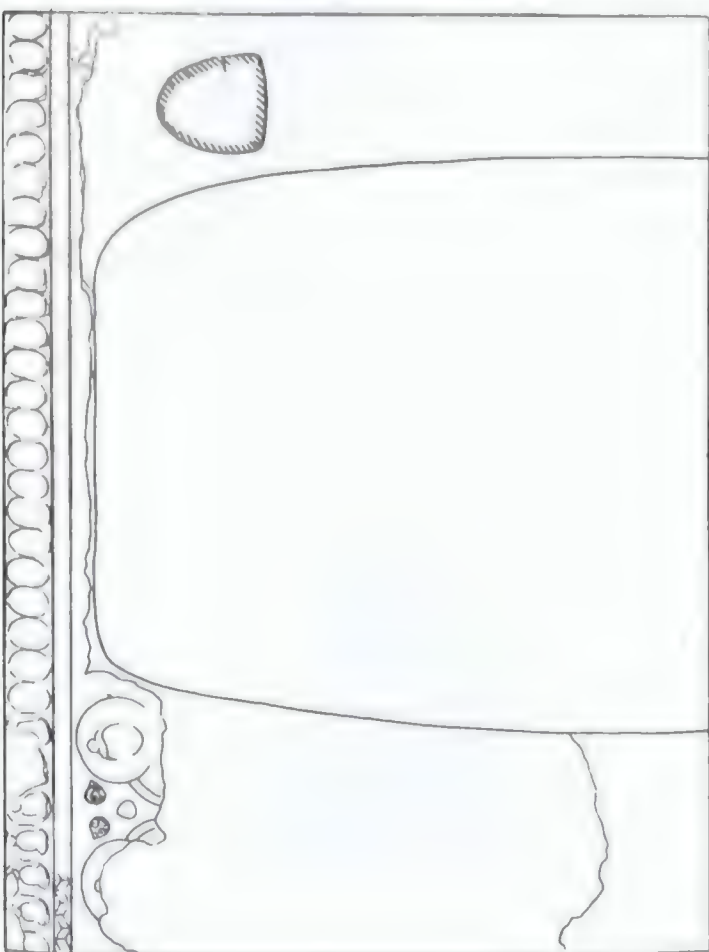
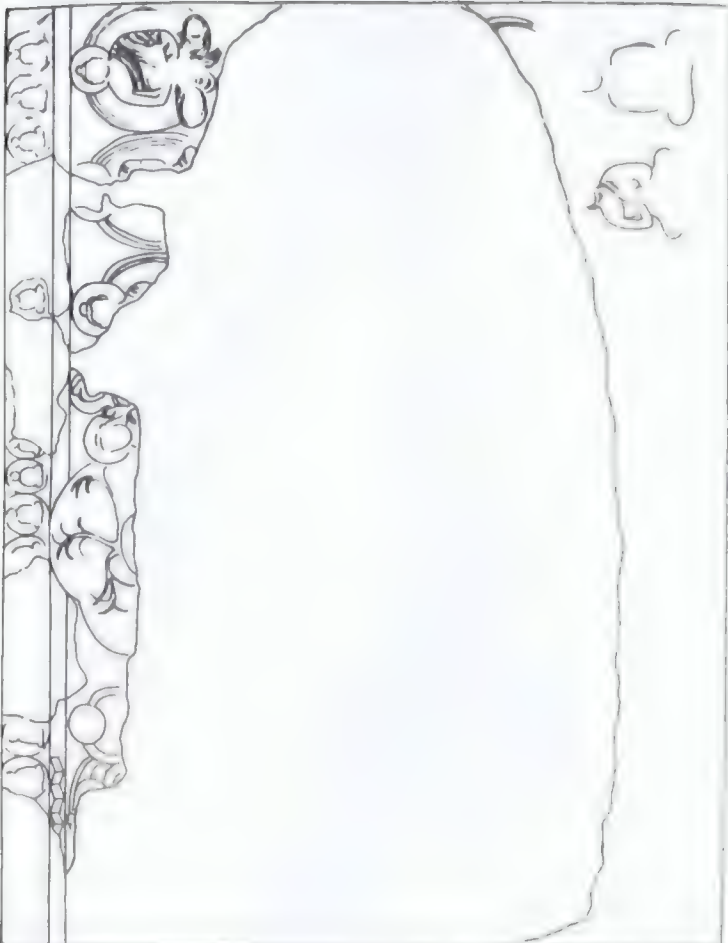
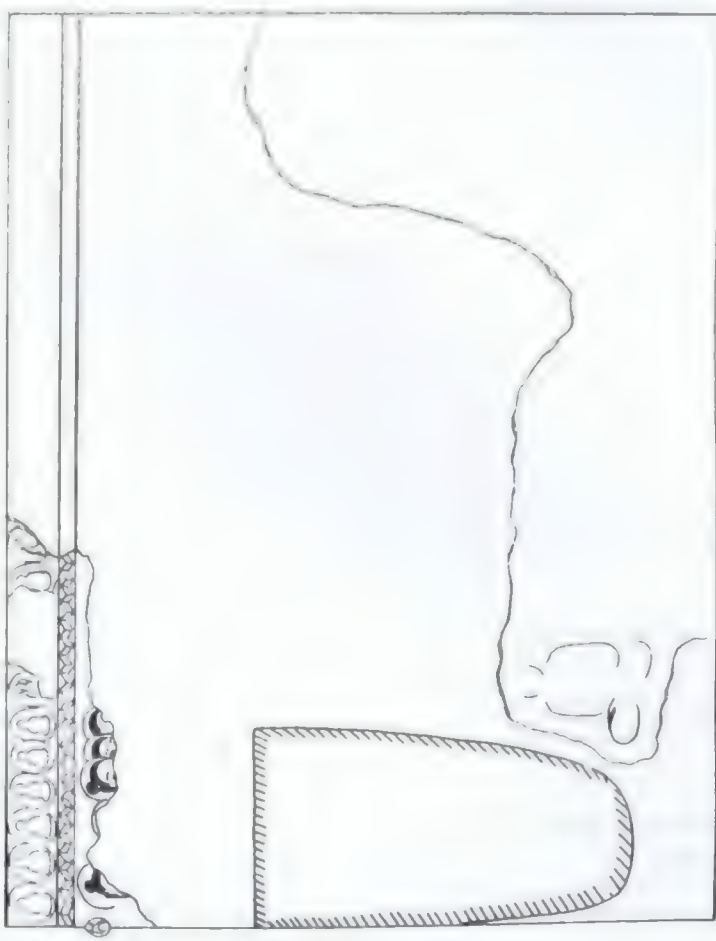
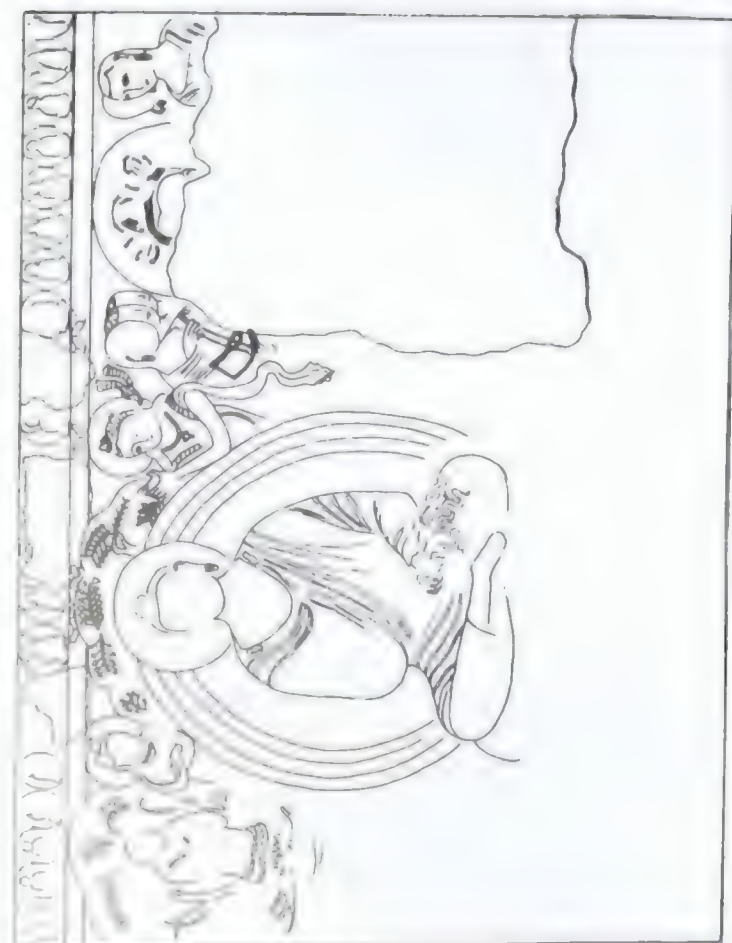


Fig. 84 - Bāmiyān. Niche H. Soffit.



Fig. 85 - Bamiyan. Cave N. North wall, detail of Buddha.

Fig. 86 - Bāmiyān. Cave N. Reconstruction of paintings.



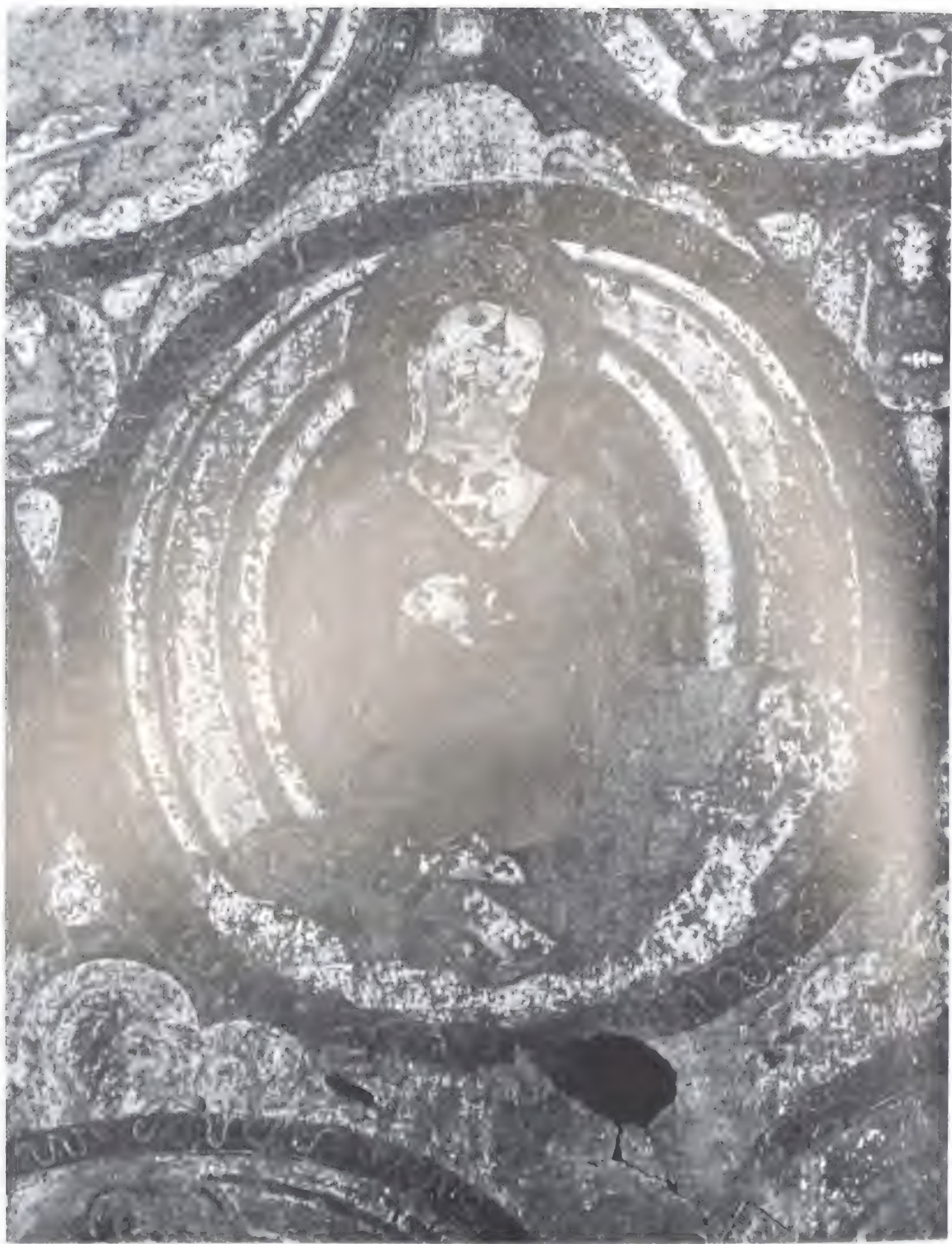


Fig. 87 - Bāmiyān. Niche 'i'. Side wall, detail of Buddha.



Fig. 88 - Bāmiyān. Niche 'i'. Ambulatory, detail of standing Buddhas.

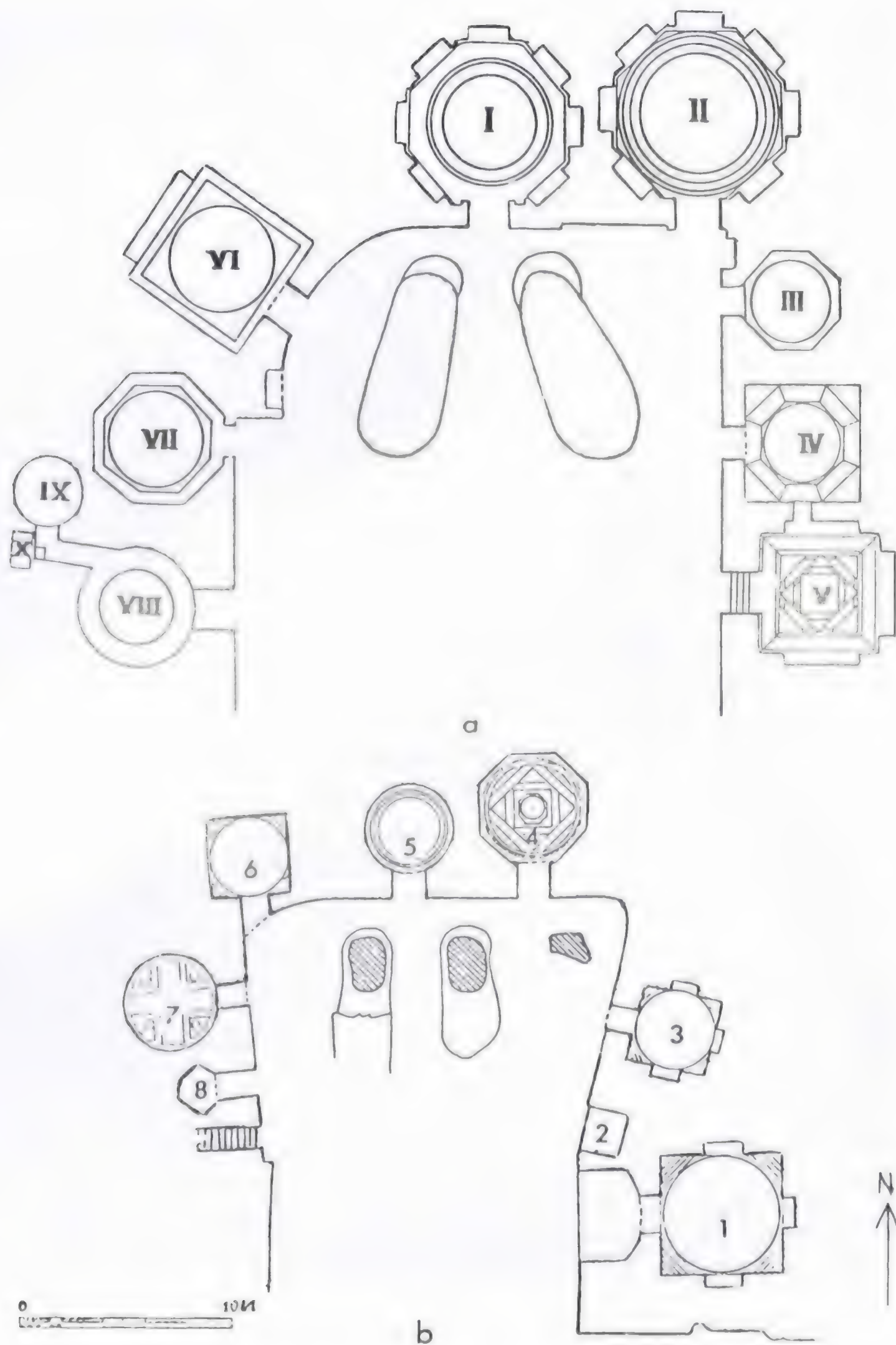
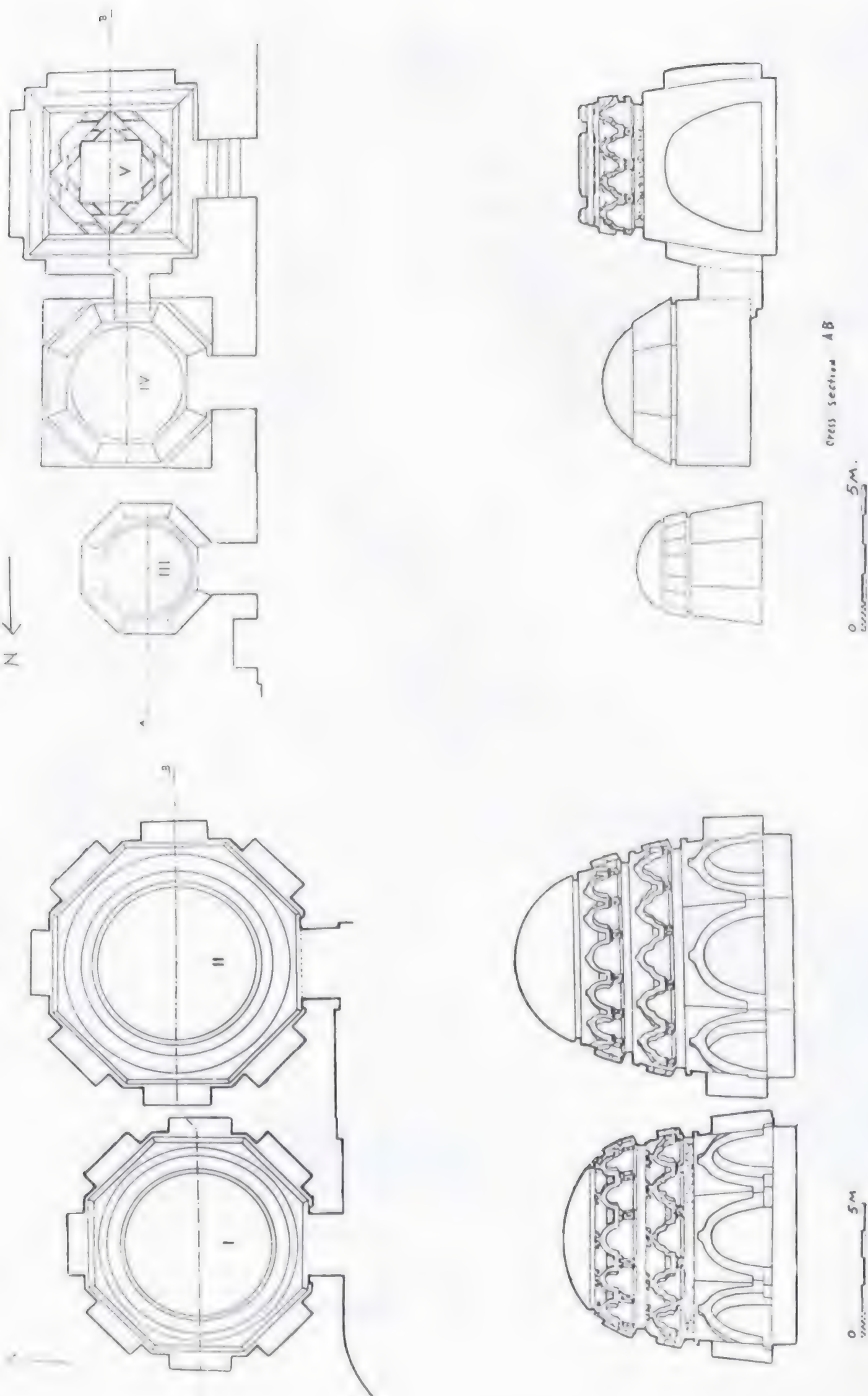


Fig. 89 - Bāmiyān. 55-meter Buddha niche. Caves at base of niche.

Fig. 90 - Bāmiyān. 38-meter Buddha niche. Caves at base of niche.



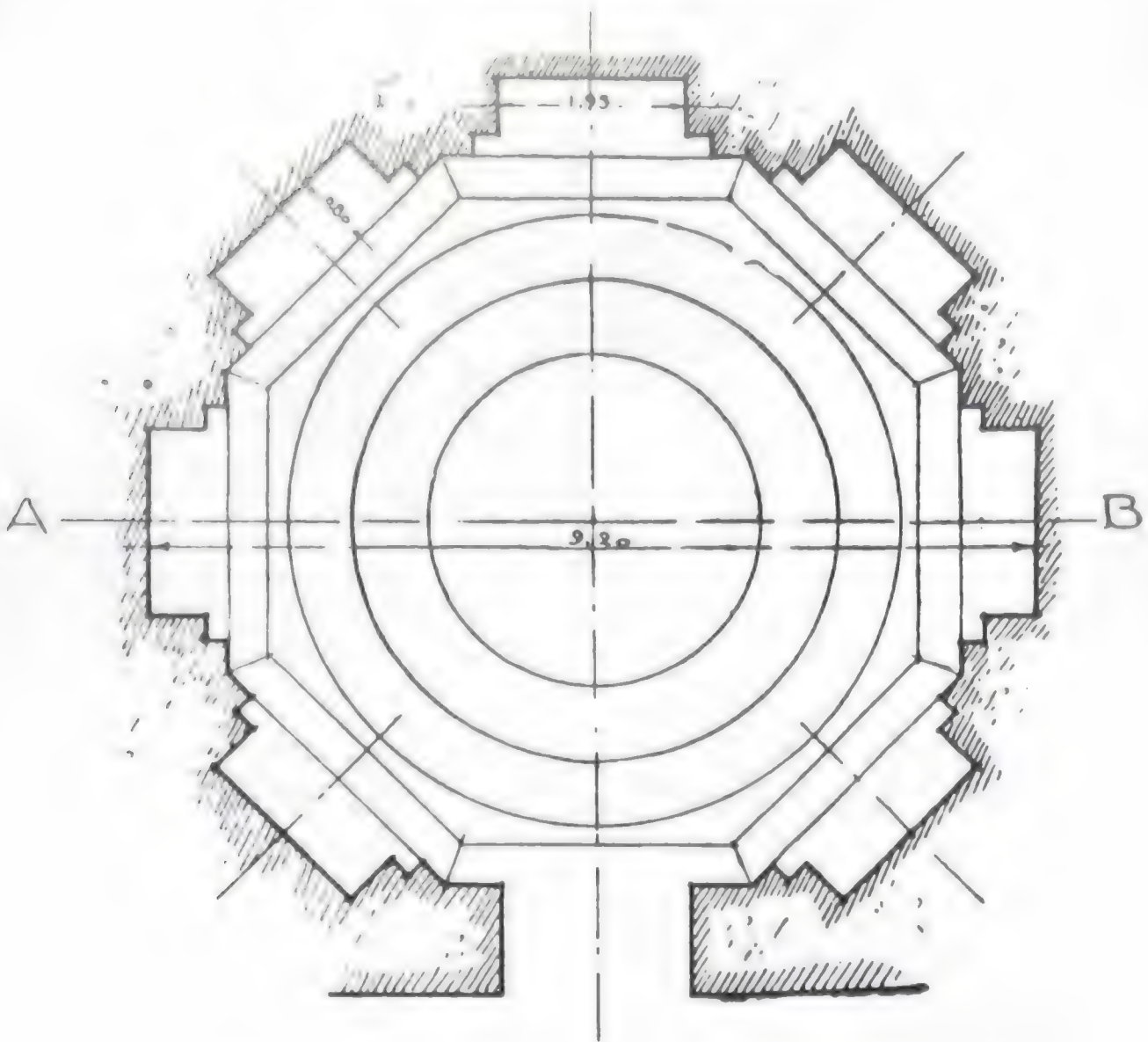
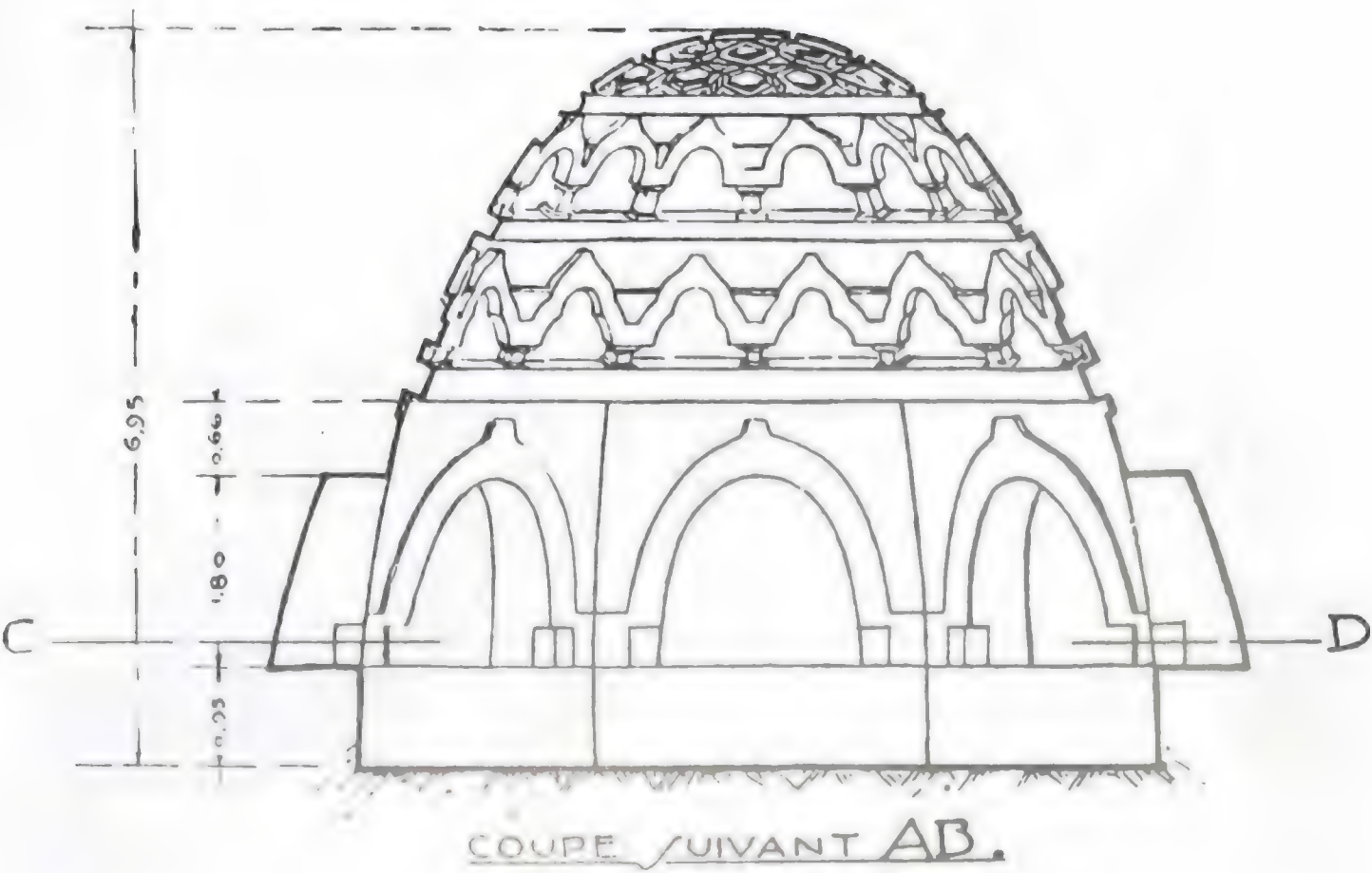


Fig. 93 - Bāmiyān. Cave XI. Plan and cross section.



Fig. 94 - Bāmiyān. Cave XI. Architectural decoration.



Fig. 95 - Pakistan. Stūpa. Bronze.



Fig. 96 - Bāmiyān. Cave XI. Reconstruction of ceiling.

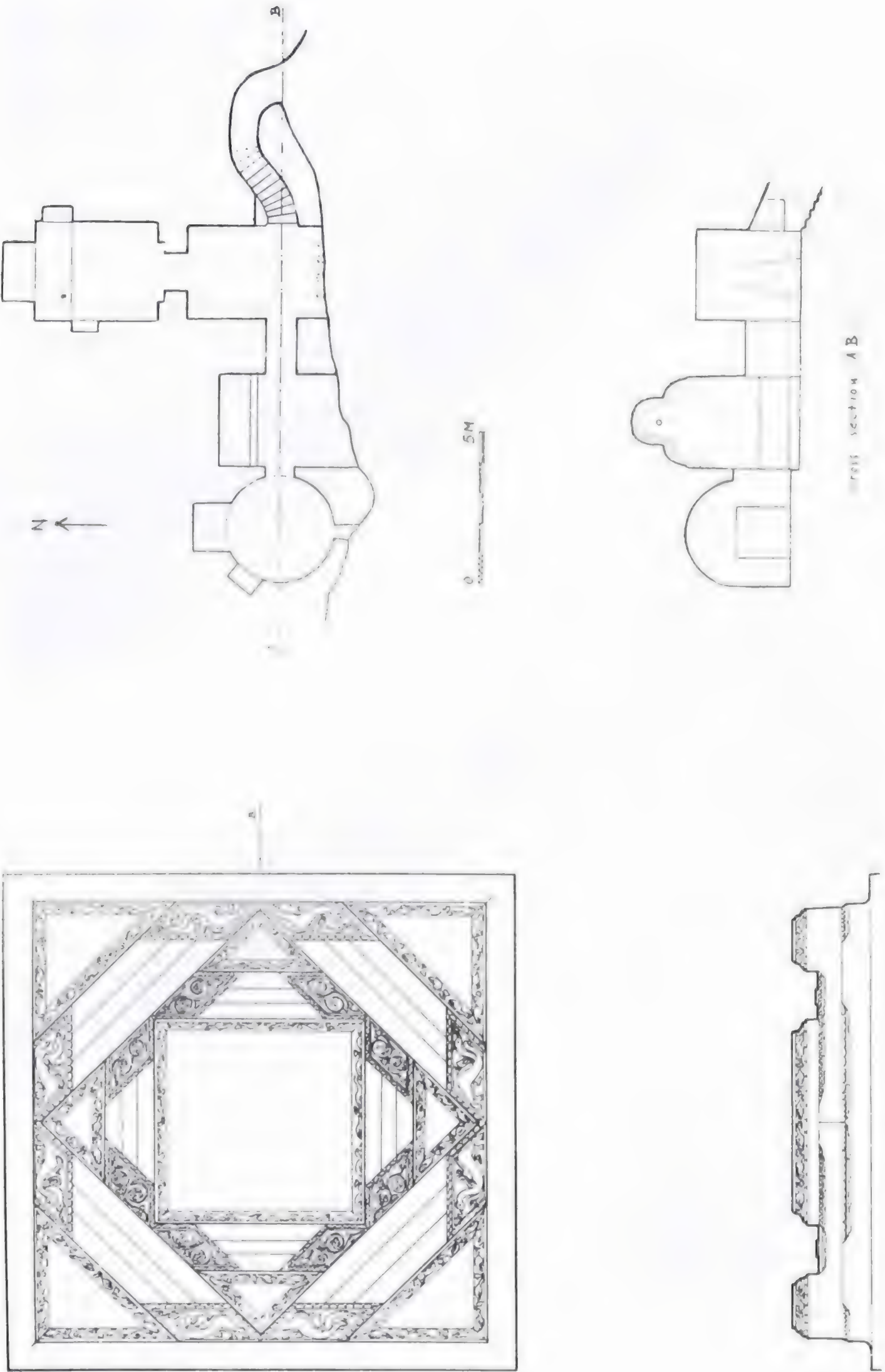


Fig. 97 - Bāmiyān. Cave V. Reconstruction of lantern ceiling and decoration.

Fig. 98 - Bāmiyān. Cave XII. Plan and cross section.

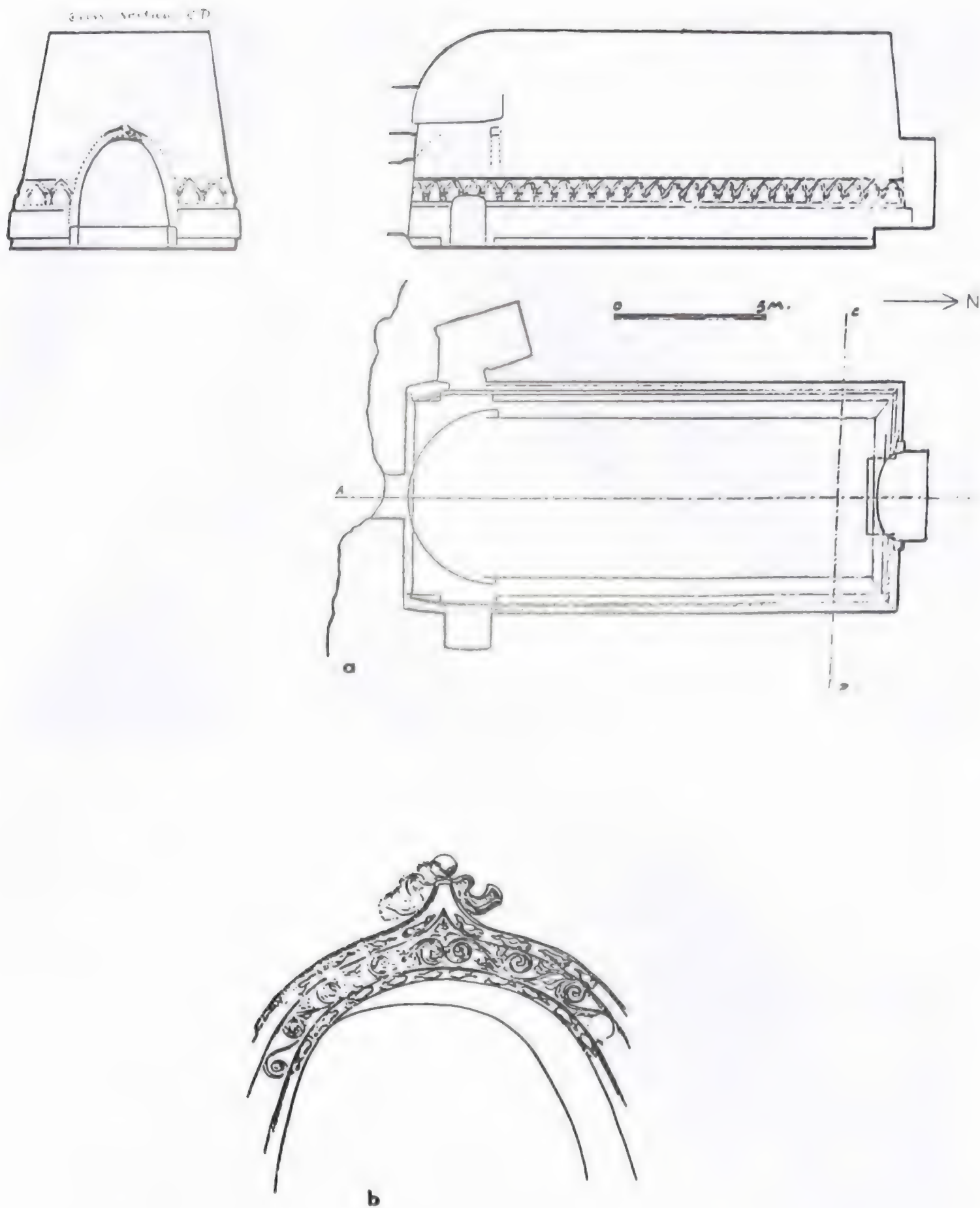


Fig. 99 - Bāmiyān. Cave XIV. Plan, cross section, and architectural decoration.



Fig. 100 - Bāmiyān. Cave N. East wall, detail of crown

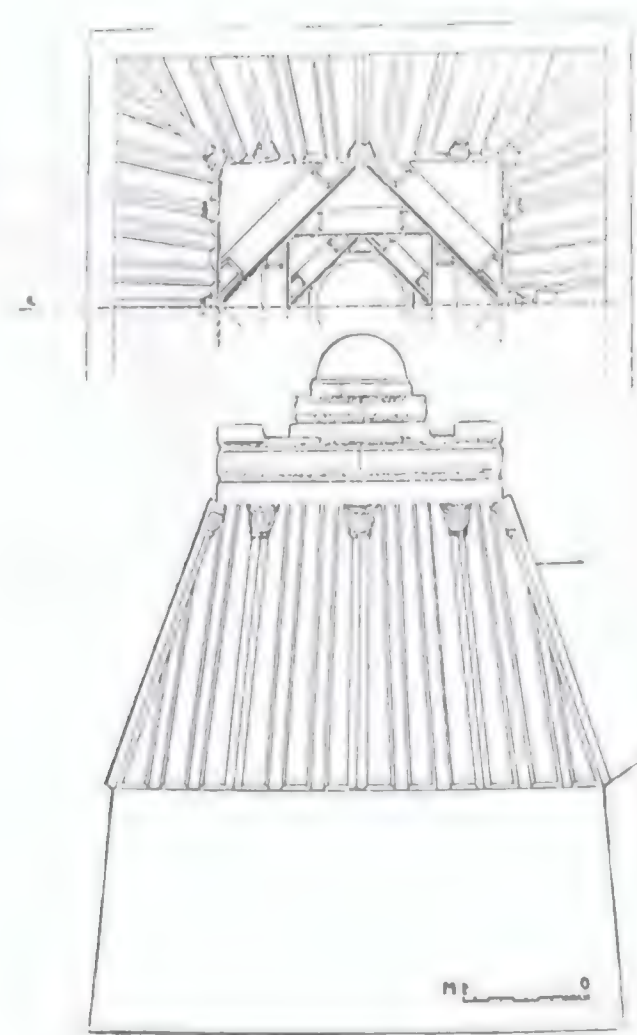


Fig. 101 - Bāmiyān. Cave XV. Plan and cross section.



Fig. 102 - Kakrak. Buddha.

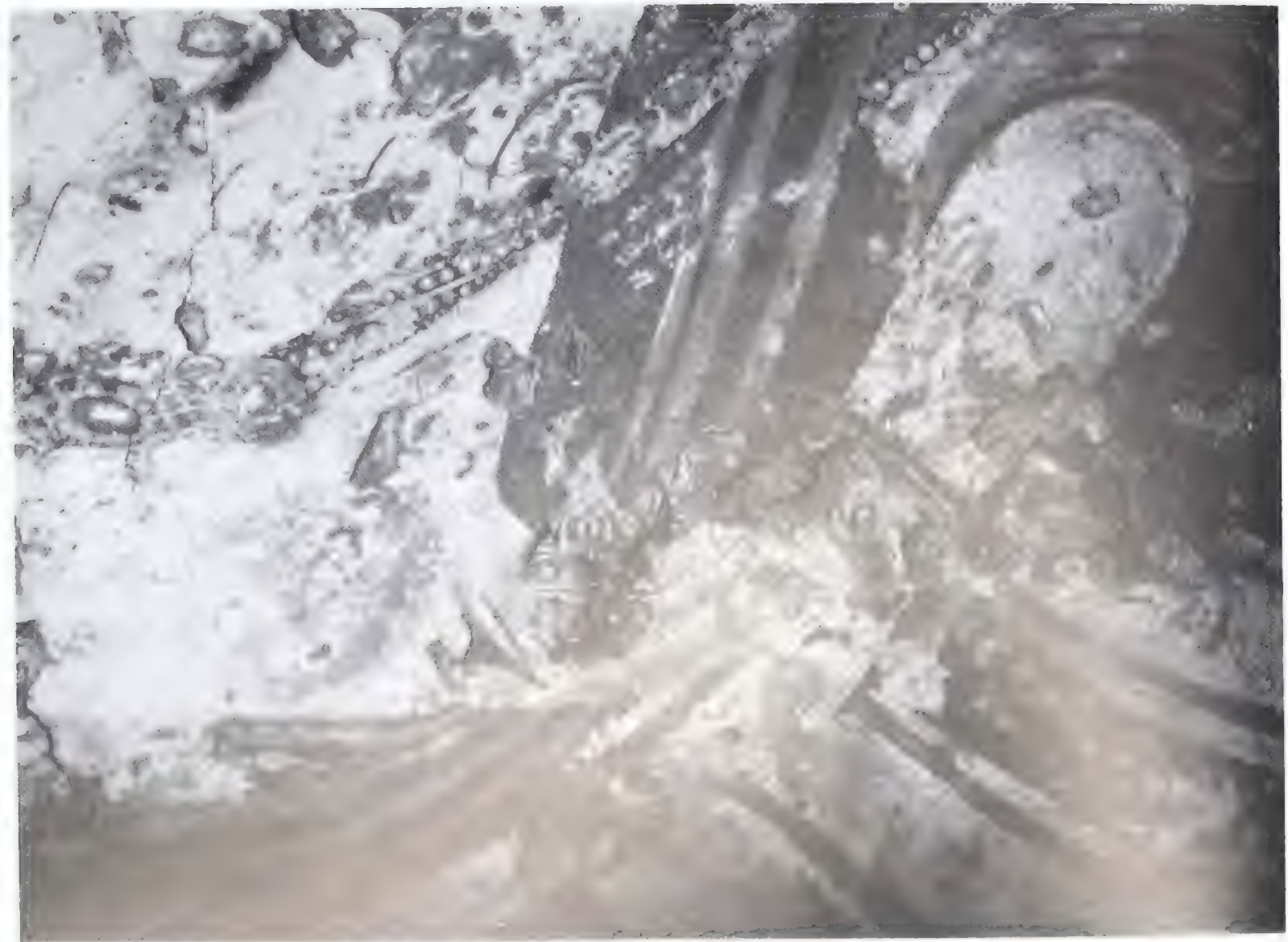


Fig. 103 - Kakrak. Bodhisattva
Detail of ceiling.

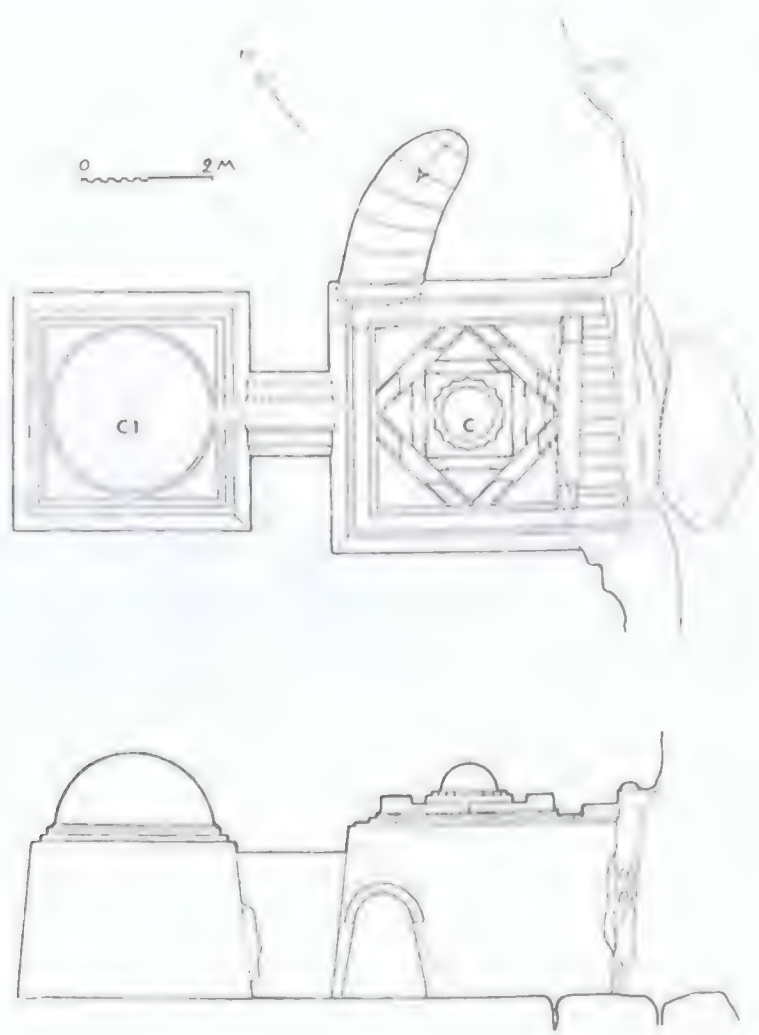


Fig. 104 - Foladi. Cave C.
Plan and cross section.

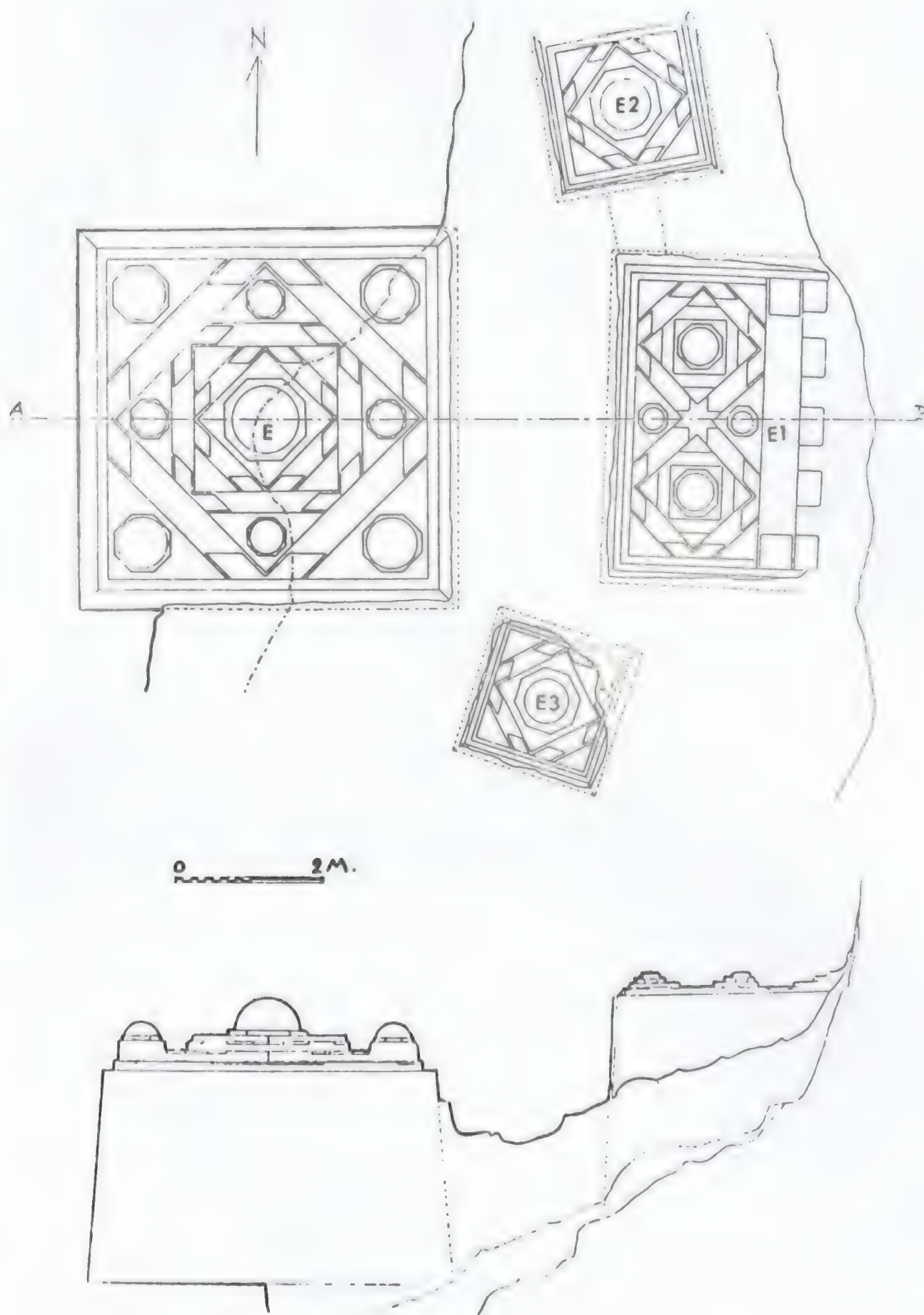


Fig. 105 - Foladi. Cave E. Plan and cross section.



Fig. 106 - Folādi. Cave E. Dome.



Fig. 107 - Foladi. Ceiling of Cave E. Buddhas.

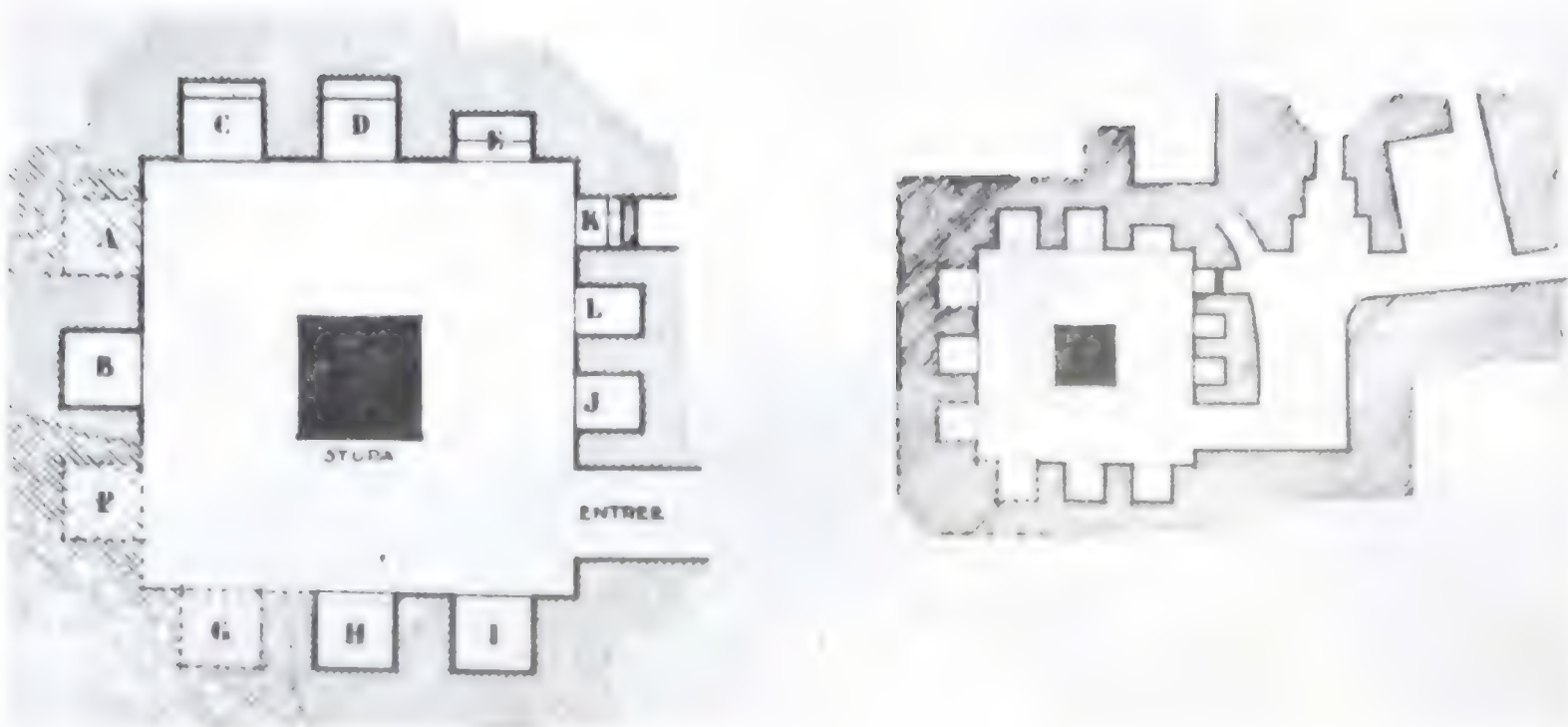


Fig. 108 - Fondukistān. Plan.

Fig. 109 - Fondukistān. Vaiśrāvaṇa (left figure) and unidentified male figure.



Fig. 110 - Fondukistān. Niche D. Face of Bodhisattva. Kabul Museum.

Fig. 111 - Fondukistān. Niche D. Excavation photograph.





Fig. 112 - Fondukistān. Niche D. Excavation photograph of Bodhisattva.



Fig. 113 - Fondukistān. Niche D. Male figure.

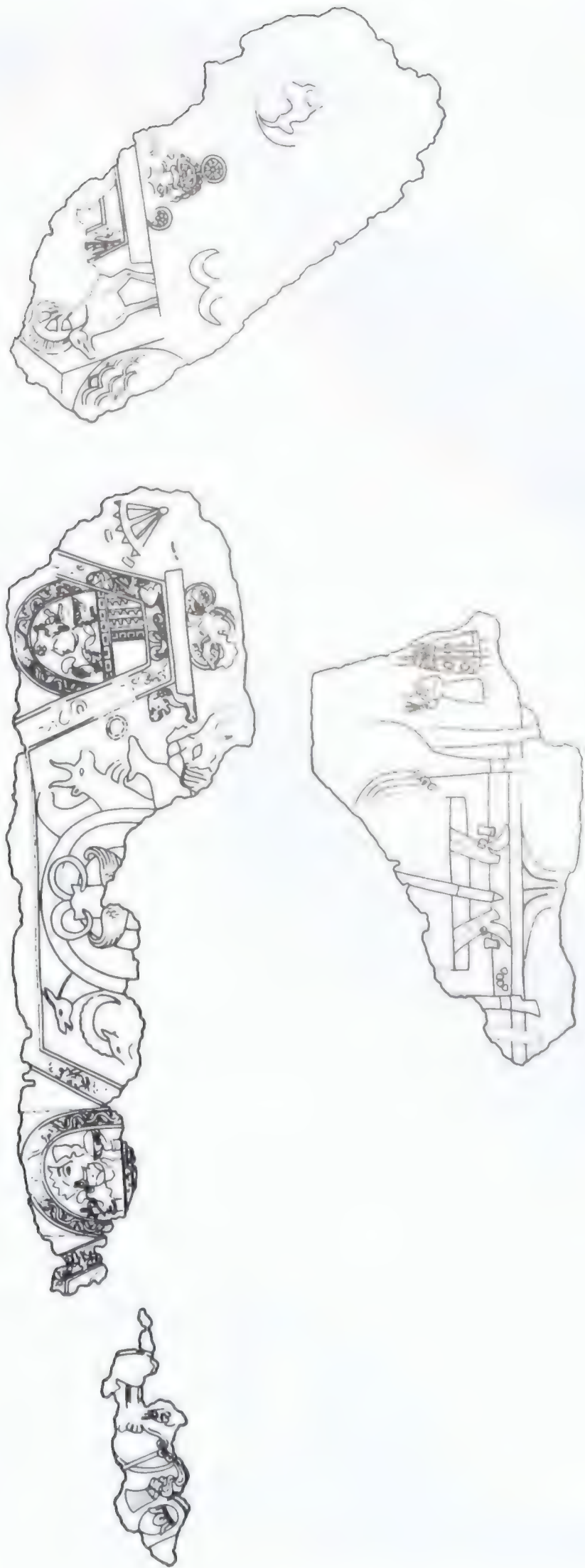


Fig. 114 - Nigār. Paintings in niche, sketch of remains.



Fig. 115 - Nigâr. Niche.



Fig. 116 - Bāmiyān. 55-meter Buddha niche. Donor.



Fig. 117 — Bāmiyān. 55-meter Buddha niche. Soffit, detail of dancing girl.

Fig. 118 — Takrak. Drum zone.



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